THE CREATIVE ADVENTURE NO. 2

welcome to: THE CREATIVE adventure

WHAT IN GOD'S NAME IS TCA!!??

Plainly enough, it is a fanzine. More specifically, it is a creative effort on the part of many people. It is borne out of a love and admiration for the comic art medium.

It's just that simple. Any more words would be superfluous.

Besides, we can't think of anymore

HA HA HA . Those laughs coming from nowhere (or rather, the left of the page) remind us that we have some space to fill— — er, we mean, that we have an important tale of how the two talented (???) editors of TCA got this issue together.

David, after a very successful first issue of TCA, felt that it was his duty to do even more for fandom. After he failed to commit suicide by jumping out of his basement window, he went back and decided to stick to TCA.

Looking for some good art, he walked down 42nd street. To his amazement, he found Klaus Janson (who?) in the gutter — — along with his art. And David, being the incredible humanitarian he is, lifted him out of that gutter on 42nd street, and dropped him off at 34th.

And that is the sad tale behind TCA 2.

Kinda makes you cry, doesn't it?

. . . And a little sick too, eh?

But that's Life, and also Time, Newseek and the Reader's Digest.

Artistic contributions by:

John Cornell, Dennis Fujitake, Gary Kato, Richard Krauss, John Pound, Dan Recchia, Steve Riley, Ed Romero, Bob Smith, and Ronn Sutton.

Literary contributions by:

John Benson, Bernie Bubnis, John Cornell, Steve Englehart, William Fugate, Dennis Fujitake, Tom Greeniones, Richard Krauss, Gordon Matthews, John McLaughlin, and Steve Riley.

HOPE YOU ENJOY THE ISSUE!

THE CREATIVE ADVENTURE 2, July 1972. Published happily at 83 Irma Avenue, Port Washington, New York, 11050, USA. David Kasakove is the compulsive editor and publisher of this fanzine, and Klaus Janson is the perverted contributing editor. This issue costs a measly dollar, as does the third issue. Ah yes. Please don't order beyond issue number 3. Our super bombastic first issue (???) is still available for 50 cents— — and we wish you'd help us get them off of our hands. This issue is copyright David Kasakove 1972, NO PART of this fanzine may be reprinted without the written consent of the editor. Such practices are unethical and unfair (not to mention rather costly after we sue.) Indeedy, contributions are needed and desired, but, in the case of artists, please send photo—stated samples of your work, if possible, BEFORE sending us the real thing. Peace to all.

THE CONTENTS PAGE YOU DOPE!

Western Cover by Dick Giordano 1
Introductory Notes by the editors 2
Door of Contents 3
What! — You Again? by Bernie Bubnis 4
with illustration by John Pound
Introduction to the interview by David Kasakove and Klaus Janson 5
An Interview with DICK GIORDANO 6
conducted by Klaus Janson,
with illustrations by:
Klaus Janson
Ronn Sutton
Steve Riley
Dan Recchia
Bob Smith
Full Page Illustration by Dick Giordano 17
From Reading to Writing by Steve Englehart 18
with illustrations by:
Klaus Janson
Dan Recchia
Centre—Spread by Dennis Fujitake 20
A comic strip by Klaus Janson and David Kasakove . 22
A Gary Kato Portfolio 26
For Trade— The Old Super Hero by Tom Greeniones 30
with illustrations by:
Klaus Janson
"Fanzine Blues" by Richard Krauss 32
The Communication Column 36
with written contributions by:
John Benson
Gordon Matthews
John McLaughlin
William Fugate
John Cornell
Steve Riley
Dennis Fujitake
with illustrations by:
Klaus Janson
Gary Kato
John Cornell
Editorial 39
with illustration by:
Ed Romero
Back Cover by Dan Adkins 40

WHOOPS! WE ALMOST FORGOT: ALL ILLUSTRATIONS IN THIS FANZINE ARE THE COPYRIGHTED PROPERTY OF THEIR RESPECTIVE PUBLISHERS: NPD, INC., + CHARLTON COMICS GROUP

WHAT!- YOU AGAIN?

"Why don't you write up an article about a few of your experiences in the fandom of the old days?" is what Kasakove asked me in our first phone conversation.

"I don't like writing anymore—and besides, I'm in a full body cast, and besides, I'm infected with nuclear contamination, and besides. . .I'm running out of steam with this nostalgia bit." I clicked the phone dead in his ear.

I guess Kasakove thought I was trying to ditch an assignment, but that wasn't it at all. All I'm doing lately is writing about my "past experiences." I'm telling the same stories over and over and keeping two steps in front of the reviews. I'm getting like the comedian with only one routine.

In times of trial and tribulation a growing man turns to his mother or Ronn Fradkin. Yes,the infamous Ronn Fradkin of olden New York fandom. The very same Ronn Fradkin who Julius Schwartz accused of looking like Howdy Doody, and then tried to drive a nail through his lips to "keep his big dummy mouth shut."

I decided to take my problem to Ronn and ask his sage advice.

Fradkin has been out of fandom for a while; so I had to really track him down. I found him selling pretzels from a push cart on East 4th street in New York City. (Some people really go to pieces when they leave fandom.)

"Ronn I've got to re—establish myself in fandom. I'm living off past glories and I'm running out of material. What can I do to gain new prominence in fandom?"

Frad chuckled, bit off a huge chunk of hard pretzel and mumbled through the wad of dough in his mouth, "Got you covered, Bubs. We been friends for a long time so you know I wouldn't steer you wrong. Now here's what you do—strip naked, put on an overcoat and go down to the Comics Code Authority and expose yourself to the staff. If that doesn't get you a little publicity at the next con, nothing will."

Now, I've always admired the Fradkin mind. It was a finely tuned piece of machinery calculated to churn a little faster with each thought. Unfortunately, it was churning so fast this time that I thought his head would spin off his shoulders. I backed off a few steps, flipped him a dime to pay for my half—eaten pretzel and then ran like hell to get away from this maniac.

Fradkin wasn't the answer. His idea could prove interesting if I was trying to make it big in pervert—fandom—but this was Superman Land.

Dear David;

Here is the article I promised you. This is probably the greatest piece of writing done by an American in the last 20 years—so I trust you'll do it justice by spelling my name right.

best,

Bubs

BERNIE BUBNIS

When I first entered fandom, I was followed by a very close friend of mine, Scot Saboure. Scottie wrote a few articles for my first fanzine (Comic Heroes Revisited) and had since returned to his native California to work for the record industry. Scottie knew me better than anybody and we still kept in touch via Christmas cards and such. Well, I figured I'd give my "old buddy" a call and seek his help.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Saboure is not at his desk right now, Mr. Bubnis."

"Well, can I leave a message?"

"I'm trying to get rid of him now."

"Excuse me?" I asked.

"I'm sorry Mr. Bubnis, I wasn't talking to you—I was talking to Mr. Saboure. Now, would you like to leave a message for him when he gets back?"

At this point old Scottie stopped fooling around and picked up his phone (the old card).

"Scottie, my friend, I need your help. I'm trying to make a new name for myself in fandom. I've got to develop some new schtick and show these kids that the old fellow still has a lot on the ball. Help me out, old buddy. What can I do to really benefit fandom and do a service to my fellow fans?"

"Leave."

Scottie always did have a way with words. And anyway, it was probably a bad connection, and the sun had probably gotten to him out there, and anyway, he never liked me much when we were close friends either.

Well, your suggestions are welcomed. Help send this boy to camp. Maybe I'll retire from fandom for another few years and then return to write about how I made a comeback in fandom writing about my come back. Yep. That'll be the new me. (Doing the same old thing.)

Medical Report: Don't worry fellow Fradkin fans—he wasn't seriously injured when the vice squad arrested him for indecent exposure outside the Comics Code offices. Unfortunately, during the ensuing struggle Frad got a portion of his body lodged into a Xerox machine. He'd like to get some cards from all his friends out there. Write: Belvue Hospital, N.y., N.y., Rooms 256, 257, 258, and 259.

[] Bernie Bubnis

DAVID AND KLAUS SUDDENLY FIND THEMSELVES-
LIGH! I JUST FOUND MY-SELF!
I THINK I LIKED YOU BETTER LOST!
KNOCK! KNOCK!
WHO'S THERE?
PHIL
PHIL WHO?
NO NOT PHIL-WHO-! PHIL-ER! THIS PANEL IS A FILLER! A JOKE!
SO ARE YOU.
--THRUST MYSTERIOUSLY INTO A COMIC STRIP WORLD!
WHERE ARE WE?
WHY WE'RE IN A COMIC BOOK WORLD!
HOW DO YOU KNOW?
CAUSE I READ IT IN THE CAPTION UP THERE!
GOOD GRAVY! WHAT'S THAT?
IT'S A DRAWING BOARD
HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?
WHO DO YOU THINK IS DRAWING THIS MESS?
SUDDENLY THE LIGHTS GO OUT
NOW WHAT HAPPENED?
I SPILLED MY INK.
SUDDENLY, THE LIGHTS GO ON! (CAUSE THE INK ONLY SPILLED ON PANEL 3.)
IT'S--
OH MY GOD!! LOOK--

DICK GIORDANO

this interview with Dick Giordano was conducted by Klaus Janson in February of 1972. We would like to especially thank Dick Giordano for taking time out of his extremely busy schedule to help in the editing of the interview.

JANSON: In your opinion, what are the elements of a comic that make for its success?

GIORDANO: Success, you mean sales—wise?

JANSON: Yeah.

GIORDANO: God I wish I knew. There are things, I think, that we all feel have something to do with it, I . . . The thing that I would look for first would be an interesting premise. . . One that is simple, relatively easy to explain to new readers as they join us and one that is logical; believable to **some** de—gree. That's very important. That's the thing that some people overlook. In creating a series, they come up with a premise that no one can possibly be—lieve. "Sarge" on television is an exam - ple of that. No one could believe in a cop turned priest, and no matter how good the execution, it was doomed to failure.If there is a credibility gap, it's got to be small enough so that people can put it aside, and believe the premise that you've established.

JANSON: What would you consider an acceptable premise in a comic book?

GIORDANO: Well . . . there's this guy that's born on another planet, see? And the gravity on that planet is consider-ably higher than here. So that when he comes to this planet, he is able to do things that people here can't do. With Superman, it's an acceptable premise. People understand that and they can believe it; particularly at the time when it was done. There's logic in it. It's simple. It doesn't have to be explained to any great extent each time you do the book.

Another thing you need, if I may con-tinue with Superman, is characterization. That's very , very important. In order to care about the story, you have to care about the people, and in order to care for the people you have to believe in them. Superman/Clark Kent were two seperate characters. And it was the kind of thing kids, particularly then, found interesting.

We had this rather "chicken reporter" who was always running off at the first sign of trouble. Of course, we all knew, being readers, that he did it so he could be Superman. But Lois Lane, Per-ry White and other people around the Daily Planet didn't give him much at—tention., and just thought of him as a chicken reporter. And that was charac-terization. It was very basic, very primitive, but in its day, it served its purpose. The relationship of Lois to Superman, the relationship of Lois to Clark, the relationship of Perry White to both of them and so forth was all characterization. For its time, it was probably the best done characteriza—tion in the industry.

I think execution really falls last on the list. If you have all the other things, a good premise, good characterization established, the execution is not so im—portant. Only because having the other elements, the stories could almost write themselves and pretty much draw them-selves.You have to assume that whoever is going to assign the material will find an adequate artist. Superman, again, is an example of that. It never had great artwork. It's always been rather simple. To this day, it has never had great art-work. It's always been rather simple. But it didn't need the great artwork be-cause the premise and characterization were strong enough to carry it.

JANSON: Now when you say "good premise," I automatically assume it would be something, say, a person un-der twelve would understand.

GIORDANO: Well, a story is a story, a premise is a premise. I think it has nothing to do with age whatsoever. I think the comic books we do today are aimed primarily at kids. But we do have an adult audience, and we do have teen-agers who enjoy them too.

There is no conscious effort. . . a lot of people have talked about this; there's no conscious effort on Stan Lee's part, for example, to write for a particular age group. He just writes what he con-siders to be good stories. Taken one way or the other, they can be either fairy tales or novels, depending on how you execute and expand. But it's the characterization and premise that makes

the material interesting. And, it's potentially interesting to every age group, depending on the execution.

If, at a particular point, the execution becomes too childish, you'll abandon the adult readers. But it's not the premise that's at fault, because a good premise will be good for all ages. Superman is the kind of thing, for example, that all ages could enjoy if it were done in such a way to make it adult material. The premise would still be the same. You have a man from another planet. It's just that you would execute it in such a way as to make it more acceptable for an adult market. It could be done.

JANSON: Do you understand the premise of the Kirby books [Mr. Miracle, New Gods, Forever People]?

GIORDANO: (sigh) No. I understood them better after I read an interview that Kirby had in the New York Times [May 2, 1971]. I don't if you saw that. . .?

JANSON: No.

GIORDANO: He made some statements about his material and after I read them I went back and read some of his stories, and I could see the points made. I think . . . this is a difficult thing for me to do. I've never met Jack and I don't want to give opinions in such a way as to. . . you know. . . I don't want to throw bricks at Jack from long distance.

I can't honestly say I've read all of his books , so I can't make definite statements about the material. But I know I've had difficulty getting through the books. That's why I haven't read them straight through; because I couldn't understand everything that he was trying to say.

I rather suspect, and this is just suspicion on my part, that Jack could've used a strong editor like Stan Lee, to take the points he wanted to make, and make them clearer. I don't say that they're not made, I say that they're not made clear enough, in my opinion, for the average reader. I think the points are there, but they're so subliminal , that is escapes detection from time to time. It certainly escaped mine from time to time.

JANSON: Yeah, well it escaped mine, too.

GIORDANO: I think Jack is a saleable talent. The material he's done in this business has so far proved saleable. And it's very difficult for me, who has an opposite record, to say that Jack is not doing what he is supposed to do.

JANSON: Speaking of opposite records, why did your books at National fail?

GIORDANO: God only knows!!!
(laughter)
No. . . I don't know. . .

JANSON: Well, I remember you mentioned once that the last couple of issues of Aquaman were failing, probably, you said, because of the covers.

GIORDANO: Yeah, I still think the covers had a great deal to do with it. But, I think, perhaps, the kind of comic books that I wanted to edit were not the kind of comics that that kids who buy this stuff, really want to read.

You have to understand that, because of a situation in this country that has to do with magazines and so forth, we are not able to produce a comic book for a small audience. I've gone through these figures before, but when I say Aquaman or whatever I've done has failed, it has failed with better than 100,000 people reading each issue. Failure is relative.

In the case of comic books selling at 15 cents, if you sell at less than 150,000 copies consistently, you have to consider dropping the book. That's the mathematics of the business, and there is no way around that.I could have 125 thousand regular, satisfied, readers— — and the book is a failure. And it's a failure because there is no way to sell 125,000 copies an issue and make money.

JANSON: Would you be able to survive on 125,000 readers if the book was a quarter book?

GIORDANO: Well, I have to go by the figures that I was aware of at the time I was editor. I'm not told what the figures are now. I'm not sure what the exact production costs come to. A quarter book at our normal discount would have made it a little easier to sell 125,000 and still stay in business.

But I'm thinking beyond that. I'm thinking that if a publisher has enough faith in a particular magazine, or group of magazines, that he might want to consider just raising the price or perhaps changing the format if he wanted to take it further. Raising the price and saying, "Look you 125,000, if you're interested in this mag, will 100,000 of you pay an extra dime so we can keep publishing it?" sounds silly but it's the kind of thing done in Europe. Europe is very comic conscious; and they don't have any of the public bad mouthing about comics there, that there is here. Adults in Europe are conscious of comics and enjoy them. They don't think of them as a children's media.

JANSON: What is the difference, then, between Europe and America, if Europe has an adult readership and America doesn't?

GIORDANO: I don't know what created the difference, but the difference is there. I mean, I would imagine that American comic books over the years have been aimed directly at children and have never taken substantial steps in other directions at a time when they might have been acceptable. And the image of comics being cheap, inexpensive, four colors for a dime, and for kids— — — the image just stuck. Most adults today wouldn't be caught dead reading a comic magazine. Although I suspect some of them do, they don't do it in public.

But it's not necessarily true overseas. And I think you'll find, for example, if you go to England or France or any of the places where comics are available, you'll see they're available in a variety of sizes, page lengths and formats, including half size black and white ,tabloid size, full color and so forth. They are not restricting themselves to one price for one size and everybody producing the same thing.

Over here, it's almost essential because our country is so "well organized" that every rack in the country can accomodate only one size of comic book. And if you ship a different size you get a, "Where am I gonna put it?" Any time you experiment with size you're doomed to failure because there's no place for dealers to put a comic that doesn't conform.

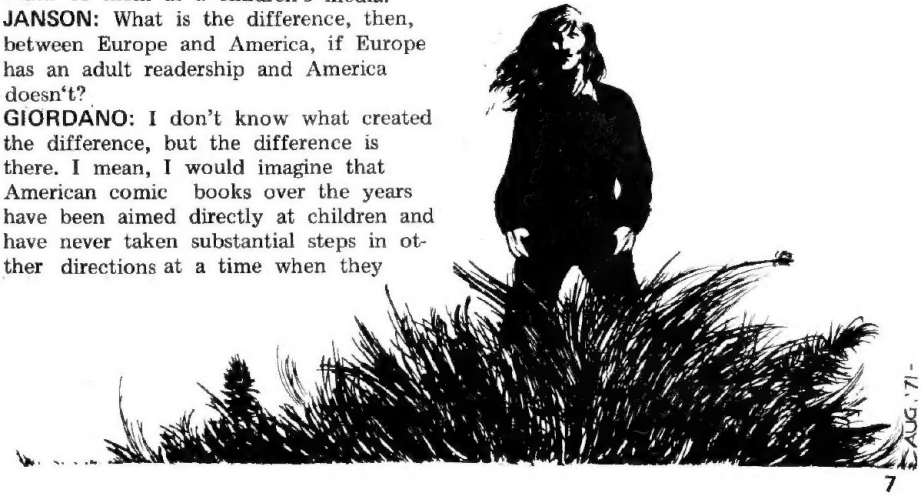
JANSON: If you wanted to put out a comic book for soley an adult readership, would you think it important not to call it a "comic"?

GIORDANO: No, I really don't know if that would have any bearing on it at all.

JANSON: Would you change the format or the presentation of the book?

GIORDANO: As a matter of fact, I've been thinking very seriously of working with Frank McLaughlin on something. . . a package, an adult comic package. Now we could change the format, but it would just be superficial. You're still going to end up with a page with panels on it and some sort of balloon lettering or some sort of way of getting dialogue into it.

I mean, you can't really get that far away from it being a comic book, so there's no sense in considering changing it. Anyone who looks at it will know what it is anyway, no matter what you call it. You can call it "il—



lustrated fiction" if you want, but when anyone opens it up, they'll say, "Oh, it's a comic book." I don't care how you change it, it's still going to be panels, it's still going to be pictures.

JANSON: How would you change it, though?

GIORDANO: The "adult" part of it would be mostly in the storyline, but the format, the actual visual format, would be changed only to the extent that there would be more movie picture sequences. You know, six panels across with an action progressing, wherever that was important to the story line.

But I don't think not calling it a comic book would help. As far as the wholesalers and retailers are concerned, they will take whatever you send them and put it in a packet that they have which is the same size. And if you put out a sex magazine that's tabloid size it's going to go with tabloid magazines, no matter what yours is. Whether you call it a comic or not,it's going into the space that fits, if at all.

JANSON: How much effect does that policy have on comics?

GIORDANO: That is the major problem in our industry today and the one that has to be solved. The rest is all bullshit unless this is solved. We simply have no place to display our wares. The amount of stores that are now open that display a full line of comics are growing smaller by the year. There was a time when the major outlet for comics was the little "ma and pa store." There are only a few of them still around. You may know a few in this neighborhood. I know of two in this area that carry a large line. Just two!

Now, if you don't happen to be near one of the few stores that sell comics, there isn't any place you can go to get them. There's no place my kids can walk to, for example, if they didn't have comics brought into the house by their father.

When their mother takes them shopping on the weekend, they'll probably go to the Lafayette Shopping Plaza or one of the local shopping centers. Thousands upon thousands of people go through these areas every day, and there isn't one comic book available. There is no way to set up the machinery to get comic books into these areas, yet.

The only thing that's been reasonably successful in large shopping centers has been comicpaks, where you get four for 98 cents, or something like that. And that's fine for the mother bringing it home for the kid. But the kid isn't going to go out and buy a four pack when he can't see the three comics underneath the one that shows in the package. To a mother or uncle buying a present, four comics is four comics. You wouldn't go and buy it that way and most of our readers wouldn't.

That's another reason for the quarter price. Large stores are not interested in selling 15 cent items. They just don't want to bother. To take up the rack space for 15 cent items when they can put up 50 cent magazines just doesn't pay for them.

Another reason is theft. By making the package a little bulkier, they figure there is less chance of shoplifting. If the price of the comic book was a quarter there'd be a chance of getting into supermarkets or big chain stores that have magazine racks. Most of them will have movie magazines and glamour and that sort of magazine available. There'd be a chance for a quarter book. No chance at all for a 15 cent book. And I think you'll find, if you go into some of these places, a lot of National's 50 cent books. Chain stores are just not interested in selling anything that costs less than that because they get, roughly, 20% of the cover price. On a 50 cent book they make a dime, on a 20 cent book, they make only four cents.

JANSON: Subtly changing the subject. . . Looking over the past ten years, what has been a major trend or developement in comics?

GIORDANO: I haven't seen any major trends in comics, at least not positive trends. I've seen a great deal of negative trends. I've seen the industry go downhill in the amount of magazines it sells every month. I've seen publishers scrambling, looking for new subject matters to translate into comic magazines. And in most cases, unforunately, the new subject matters were just old ones warmed over.

JANSON: Why is that?

GIORDANO: Well, any attempt at originality is usually discouraged out of fear. They really don't know what to do next, and most of them are ignoring the seat of the problem: the point of sale. The sales are going down not because the material is bad. In my opinion, comic books have never been better all around, editorially. Even the warmed over ones are better than their prototypes.

JANSON: Do you think that comics are in good shape then?

GIORDANO: Well, no, I don't say they are in good shape. I say they are better than they ever were editorially. There's always room for improvement, and I'm sure that's even more so today than at any other time.

But I don't believe the editorial content of comics, generally, is the reason for the dropping off of volume sales. I'm convinced that the problem is that there aren't as many copies out where they can can be bought, as there should be.

JANSON: I remember going to three or four stores to try and find a copy of Secret Six or Hawk and Dove, and even then, sometimes, I couldn't find one. I'm not surprised they were discontinued.

GIORDANO: I'm sure that has a great deal to do with all bad sales today.

The wholesalers will admit, most of them, in an unguarded moment, that they don't ever distribute ten to twenty percent of what they get. They just never leave the warehouse.

JANSON: You mean they only distribute eighty per cent?

GIORDANO: Yeah. Now if the other eighty percent are delivered, there's no guarantee that the retailers will put them out. The wholesalers will show you records and say, "Look, I distributed 80%." What he did is he brought them to a retailer and left them there tied up, along with a million other comics. There is no way of knowing how many of that bundle really reached the stands. Ten percent is a good premature rate. "Premature" means books that come back to us without ever really getting distributed. That means if you send out 200,000, you're sure to get back between 20 to 30,000, without ever seeing the light of day.

JANSON: There doesn't seem to be any way to correct that, is there?

GIORDANO: Okay, the way to correct it is this. The major problem is that the wholesaler doesn't have enough outlets to display these books. Our minimum print order is 275,000 (and when it gets down to this, National considers dropping the title). That means you have to send copies to the wholesaler that he doesn't want.

Our production costs are so high that in order to keep the per unit cost at a point where profit is possible with the cover price being what it is, it's impossible to print less than 275,000, and have it be economically feasible. You have to figure on a 50 percent sale at the newsstand in order to make money. So we're talking about 1,375 as a minimal amount of copies sold in order to break even. Keep in mind that I'm talking about a 15 cent cover price.

The solution ,in my opinion, is to do something with the price. Increase the price in such a way that you will know you're going to lose a certain percentage of your sales since certain people won't be able to afford to buy as many as they did. But then you don't have to sell as many copies anyway, in order to break even. Cut down on the amount of copies going out and the wholesaler may put them out.

You see, if we could get a quarter for the book, for the same book we were getting 15 cents for, it's obvious that that additional dime would allow us to sell only 95,000 or 90,000 copies. So maybe our print order would be 180,000 instead of 275,000. We could distribute that many, we could get the distributors to put out that many. We can't get him to put out 275,000 cause he hasn't got the space for it. It's simply impossible.

His method of distributing comics is likely to be in random bunches. He'll just throw 1000 comics in his truck. He doesn't put 100 of Superman or 100 of Spiderman and 100 of Donald Duck. To him, one comic is the same as another.

That's why some months you'll find Secret Six and some months you won't, all depending on what comics the kids grabbed to put on the truck. It's really as unscientific as all that. And you can't expect anything better as long as he only makes 2 or 3 cents on every copy he sells. He makes 30 dollars on a thousand magazines. Big deal.

JANSON: Now that it seems as though comics are going in the exact opposite direction of what you would like it to be, and you've always said comic books are in bad shape. . .

GIORDANO: . . . that's because they are. . .

JANSON: . . . and they're still in bad shape?

GIORDANO: Yeah, and they're going to be in bad shape as long as the people who make the business decisions don't start thinking forward a little bit, and plan not for next week but for five years from now. And to aim all efforts at producing a comic that will satisfy the wholesaler, retailer and reader, as well as making it profitable for the publisher. I realize it's a difficult thing to do, but certainly taking a 15 cent comic book and raising it to 20 cents doesn't do any of these things.

The quarter book was an increase in price and an increase in editorial pages- a great deal more than most people realize. The 16 additional pages were all editorial. That was a 50 % increase in pages but about a 67% increase in editorial material.

Stop and think about that. We were putting out 23 page comic books, and to that we added one page of new material and made it 24, and then we added 16 pages of reprint material. So actually, we had a much bigger editorial package than the price warranted.

JANSON: Well, it looks like National tried and was forced to take a step backwards. How is the comic book going to survive?

GIORDANO: I don't know, I'm not really convinced that it's going to survive. I am convinced that it can survive. I'm convinced it's an entertainment form, not an art form— — please let me stress that. A lot of people outside the industry think of it as an art form, and it isn't. It's an entertainment media, it's mass media.

There are many things that can be done to keep the comic book around. Kids are still interested in comic books. I watch my kids and I watch other people's kids reading them, to see if there is some enjoyment. And there is. Evidently, you still read comics. You don't enjoy as many as you used to, but that's because you've grown. Nothing has changed in comic books. You're thinking has matured,

JANSON: Yeah sure, but why wouldn't you say comics is an art form?

GIORDANO: Because it's not an art form.

JANSON: Well, what is an art form?

GIORDANO: I don't know, I. . . what's an art form?— — An art form is, well if you're going to call it an art form, you're going to compare it to the masters, for example. This is a mass produced item.

JANSON: I don't think mass production has anything to do with it, because it's mass produced after the art is finished. I mean, you can buy a mass produced Mona Lisa at Pantry Pride, too.

GIORDANO: Well, perhaps what we're talking about is a conflict in terms. An art form to me, suggests art for its own sake. It suggests a creator who has free reign. It suggests that the creation is a form of self—expression by the creator. It suggests a lot of conditions that really do not exist in the comic field.

I'm primarily a story teller. If that's an art form, fine, I'll go along with that. In the beginning I labored over things like muscles and folds and eyeballs and so forth. But, I've gotten to the point where I'm comfortable enough in handling the academic part of art that I've madestory telling my main contribution to any story that I work on. I may fail, but it's not due to lack of effort. It's due to lack of ability or time or something else.

I feel I am to the comic book writer and editor what the cameraman is to the movie industry. I am just taking the written word and translating it into a picture. Now I can't consider that an art form because I really don't have control over my material and I don't do exactly what it is I want to do.

If you consider a Grimm's illustrated book of fairy tales an art form, yes, then I'll consider a comic book an art form. It's a question of terms. But there isn't as much self expression in comics as in the material I would call art. Art is self expression and we don't get that much opportunity to express ourselves in the comic industry. Not really.

JANSON: But I wouldn't call it art in the same way as art by Michelangelo, only an art form.

GIORDANO: The artist is contributing pieces of art work to a story. If he happens to write it, it doesn't change anything. The fact is, he is responsible to the reader. He's not responsible to anyone but the person who purchases the book and reads it and takes it home and expects to be entertained for having purchased it.

There are so many contributors to a book, who can call it his own?

There's no pencil or ink by Michelangelo or Rembrandt or Van Gogh. They sat down and did what they wanted to do when they wanted to do it.

JANSON: Would you say comic books are creative and that people involved with them are being creative?

GIORDANO: Yeah.

JANSON: Do you think inking is creative tive or technical?

GIORDANO: It's either or both. Some

inkers ink strictly in a technical way and the results show it. I'm not particularly interested in the technical end of it. I don't waste a lot of time, as you know, with zip-a-tones and a bunch of the other fancy techniques, because I don't believe that contributes anything to the final result. The final desired result is still story telling. I approach my inking with that in mind. Story telling involves an awful lot of things. Let me give you an example.

The thing I do best as an inker, and the thing that probably keeps my stuff as an inker in demand, is heads. The heads have a little bit of life because I concentrate very hard on trying to make the people believable. That's part of story telling. Obviously, as an inker, I don't lay out the panels or draw the figures, so I can't contribute anything that way. But I can make the people look as much like real people as I possibly can, and I can make the expressions as realistic as possible so that you can believe the incidents that are happening.

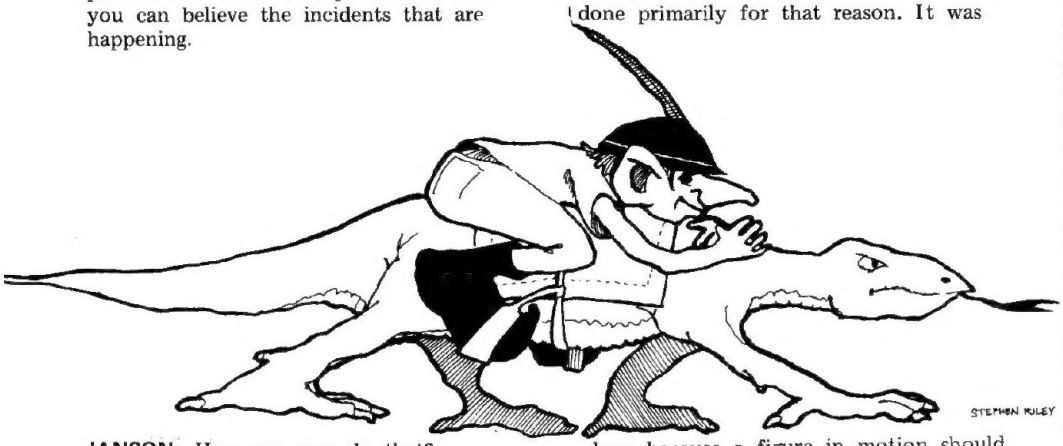
special effects and so forth, which I generally don't have the time to do; nor the inclination to be perfectly honest. If I had all the time in the world, I probably still wouldn't do it.

I don't believe that he gets as much life in the heads as is there in the pencils;if the pencils I've seen of Neal's are any indication of what Tom gets. And that is still inmy mind, the most important thing.

You have to understand that the remarks I'm making have to do with my approach and my thinking towards inking.

JANSON: How about Joe Sinnott? How would you compare his inkings to yours?

GIORDANO: Actually, I think we probably have the same aims in mind but Joe is considerably slicker than I am. I have worked hard for years to loosen up my ink style and its put on some speed, (which I'm not at all unhappy aboutbecause speed is how you make money in this business) but it wasn't done primarily for that reason. It was



JANSON: How can you do that?

GIORDANO: How it's done is craft, and I don't know if I could fully explain how. But, it has to be done in a subliminal way, without having the reader stop and say, "Hey - that's groovy!" That interrupts the flow of the story. I just want the events that are happening and the people that are making the events happen to look realistic enough so that the reader will accept them as people.

There are times when you get material, pencils, that defy attempts at creativity (laughter) by not giving the inker a way to accentuate the material that he wants the reader to focus on. When I get such a job, the thing I spend the most time on is the heads and hands. The kind of things that will convince the readers that that the characters are real.

JANSON: What do you think of Tom Palmer's inks on Neal Adams?

GIORDANO: I think Tom Palmer is probably one of the better inkers in the field, and what I've seen of his stuff, [I haven't seen all of it] on Adams, I've liked.

If you'll pardon my indulgence in my own ego boosting, I still think I do a better job on Neal than Tom does. Not craftsmanship perhaps, because Tom puts a lot of technique into it. He uses a pen and he puts in zip-a-tones and

done because a figure in motion should look as if its in motion, and it can't be done if you slowly, tediously peck away at a line. That sort of kills the motion that might've been there. This is my own philosophy of inking.

If you move your arm quickly, the pull of the fold has to be put in quickly. That's what's going to give you the feeling of movement. It's a small thing, but it's a thing that, I feel,works.

I've liked whatever I've seen of Joe Sinnot's inking but I feel it may not be loose enough. I think he's got the right approach, he is doing all of the things right, but I think he may be laboring the line too much. I think a labored line detracts from the feeling of motion. This is, again, my own opinion. I think movement can be emphasized by a movement of line.

That's one of the things I feel Neal does wrong with his own inking. He labors the line too much and a lot of his action is sometimes stifled a bit by it.

JANSON: Would you say that your inking style has changed in the past 5 or 6 years?

GIORDANO: There has been some change, not in thinking, but in the influence. I've been influenced by all the artists who I've inked at National. That

should be obvious to anyone who looks at my stuff.

JANSON: Yeah, and you also swipe a helluva lot more.

GIORDANO: But that's a good way to learn, swiping is. I don't really see anything wrong with it. As a learning procedure, it's been a great aid to me. It shouldn't be any secret to anybody that I hadn't pencilled anything for 3 or 4 years. When I came back, I relied a great deal on swiping.

JANSON: How has your penciling changed, say, since Sarge Steel?

GIORDANO: In outlook. See, when I did Sarge Steel, story telling was one of the last things on my mind. I was interested in drawing nice pictures. When I got to a point in a story that wouldn't give me the opportunity to draw a nice picture, I'd fluff it off. But now, my concentration is on story telling, and I'm thinking of ways to make the story telling clearer, more interesting. And I'm concentrating on that first. If the drawing doesn't make it, fine.

JANSON: I had an argument with David about your "old style." He said how drab it all was and how the pictures just laid there. I said I liked it and he kept on saying how your stuff now moves out of the panel and is more exciting. . .

GIORDANO: (nod)

JANSON: Would you agree with that?

GIORDANO: Oh yeah, definately. That's what I work for.

JANSON: There's more movement. . .?

GIORDANO: Oh yeah, it moves in a lot of ways. Even still pictures can still move. I'm kind of surprised that you would think an old Sarge Steel was better. I can't see anything in it that is better than what I'm doing now.

JANSON: Generally, I can't say that either,but some pages. . .

GIORDANO: Some pages, yeah. The pages that had a great deal of movement that overcame my natural inertia. The stuff I did was pretty straight compared to what I'm doing now.

I'm getting a great deal more layout, good layouts, into my stories. I'm getting a great deal more story telling and I'm getting a great deal more action into my layouts.

JANSON: The impression I get, though, is that your artwork really hasn't changed, it's still very basic, very simplistic.

GIORDANO: Oh yeah! That's my whole bag; as an inker and as a penciler. Everybody that I've inked I've simplified. I've never made it more complicated. Simplicity is really what the material should be. It doesn't have to lack artistic merit in order to be simple. Let's get that point straight. The quantity of work has absolutely nothing to do with the quality of the work.

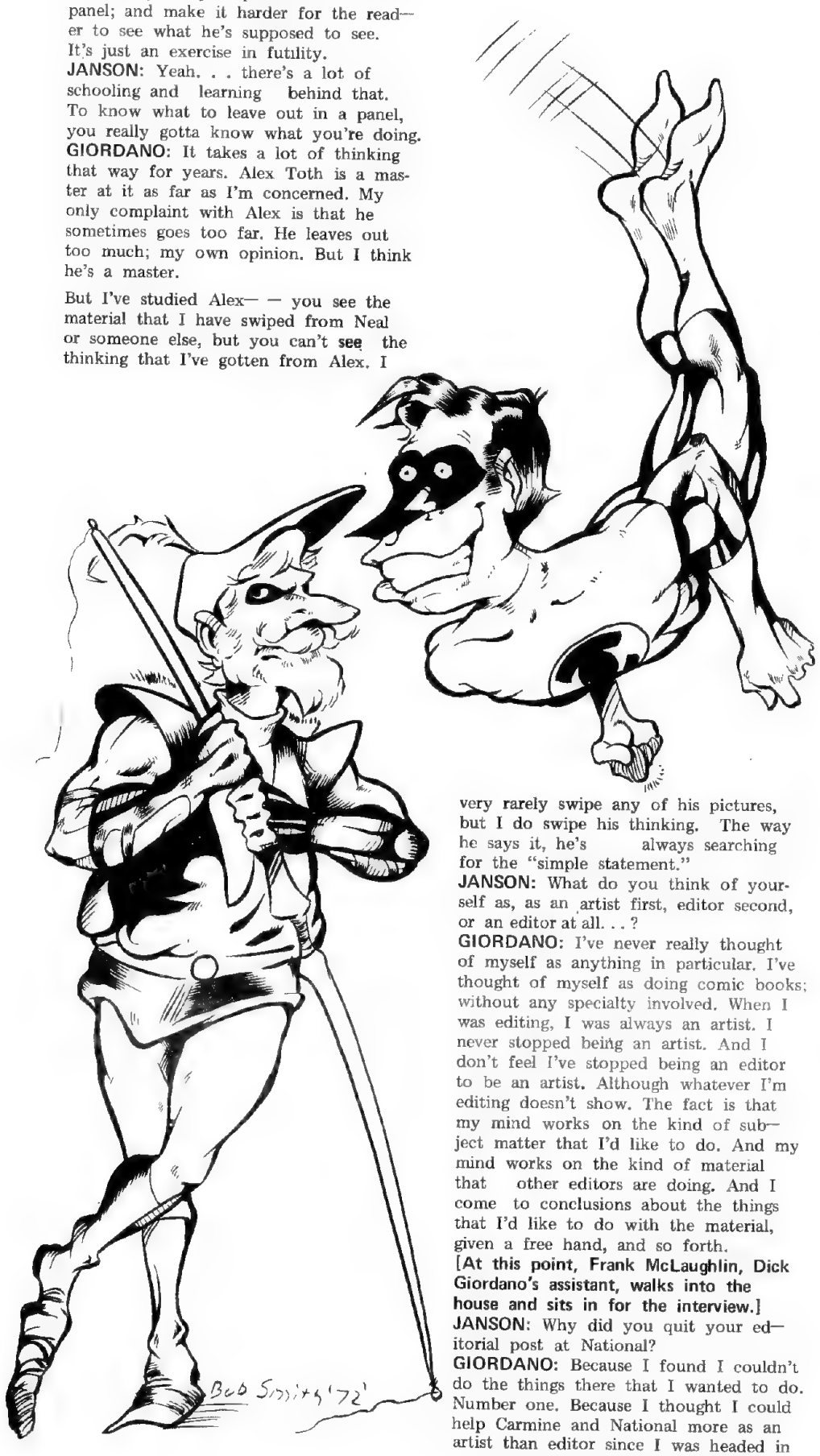
The simple line is the best line. It's the easiest to look at, it's the easiest to understand. Simplicity is really what everybody in this business should be striving for, instead of trying to see how much crap they can load into every panel. (laughter)

No, really! You know it's a mental masturbation to sit there and see if you can fill up every stupid corner in the panel; and make it harder for the reader to see what he's supposed to see. It's just an exercise in futility.

JANSON: Yeah. . . there's a lot of schooling and learning behind that. To know what to leave out in a panel, you really gotta know what you're doing.

GIORDANO: It takes a lot of thinking that way for years. Alex Toth is a master at it as far as I'm concerned. My only complaint with Alex is that he sometimes goes too far. He leaves out too much; my own opinion. But I think he's a master.

But I've studied Alex— — you see the material that I have swiped from Neal or someone else, but you can't **see** the thinking that I've gotten from Alex. I very rarely swipe any of his pictures, but I do swipe his thinking. The way he says it, he's always searching for the "simple statement."



JANSON: What do you think of yourself as, as an artist first, editor second, or an editor at all. . . ?

GIORDANO: I've never really thought of myself as anything in particular. I've thought of myself as doing comic books; without any specialty involved. When I was editing, I was always an artist. I never stopped being an artist. And I don't feel I've stopped being an editor to be an artist. Although whatever I'm editing doesn't show. The fact is that my mind works on the kind of subject matter that I'd like to do. And my mind works on the kind of material that other editors are doing. And I come to conclusions about the things that I'd like to do with the material, given a free hand, and so forth.

[At this point, Frank McLaughlin, Dick Giordano's assistant, walks into the house and sits in for the interview.]

JANSON: Why did you quit your editorial post at National?

GIORDANO: Because I found I couldn't do the things there that I wanted to do. Number one. Because I thought I could help Carmine and National more as an artist than editor since I was headed in one direction and they were headed in another direction. Diametrically opposed in many cases. Number two.

I don't question the wisdom of their policy so much as I say I couldn't operate under their policy.

JANSON: What was your greatest obstacle which kept you from doing what you wanted when you were editor at DC? Would you say it was general policy. . .?

GIORDANO: Company policy. . . well, and a little bit of office politics; which exists anywhere. It exists everywhere, I recognize it exists everywhere. I thought that when I started editing at Charlton and later at National, that I could work within the system of office politics and company policy. And I found in each case, after being there for a while, that I really didn't care to get up every morning and go down to the office and spend half my day contending with office politics and company policy and procedures and the other half of the day with the editorial thing. I just wanted to do the editorial. I didn't want to sit around thinking of a nice way to say something to a superior or having to come in and leave at a certain time because that was office policy. When it had, really, no bearing whatsoever on what I was doing as an editor. If I wanted to come in earlier or leave later or not come in at all, the criteria for judging my performance should have been the editorial quality of the material I was responsible for. But that was very rarely the judge. They were using sales reports to judge. Which is an indication of whether my material is or isn't making money. But I don't think that should be the only criteria because a great many of the magazines that are successful today weren't at first. And if the people who published them didn't have some personal faith in the material, they never would've gotten to be successful magazines. Certainly not on the basis of initial sales alone.

JANSON: Do you still want to do the things you wanted to do at one time? Do you see any possibility. . .?

GIORDANO: Not a driving need, no. I mean, if the opportunity comes along, to do some of the things I would like to do, I would probably take it. Altho I don't know if I would ever get involved in an editing situation again where I would be involved in office procedure. If I could work out a different arrangement, I might be interested. But I certainly wouldn't be a 9 to 5 editor again.

JANSON: You said once. . .

GIORDANO: No wait, not if I could help it. I've got to take that back. Because life has a way of going back on you (laughter), and I might be starving to death and the only job available might be a 9 to 5 editor. I would take it under those circumstances. Make sure that gets in there. (laughter)

JANSON: You said to me once that you would like to do a story that you yourself would write and color and pencil and ink. You haven't had a chance

to do that yet, have you?
GIORDANO: No, that's one thing I probably won't have much of a chance to do. I'm not much of a writer, and my few attempts at writing, in my opinion, have been feeble. I would like to do it because it might approach being an art form if I could do the whole thing; with no restrictions. Because it would be something that's mine. Now I'm part of a seven man team.

Julie and the writers sit down and plot a story, and they give it to a penciler and it comes to me. Then, Frank and I ink it, and the letterer handles his part, the colorist colors, and the color seperators screw up on their end. (I say this not without a bit of good humor. My wife is a color seperator!) Because so many people have had their hands in it, whatever comes out is mine only by that much (forming a one inch space in the air). So I would like to do a complete story only to be able to say, "I did that."
JANSON: Have you seen the fanzine Abyss?
GIORDANO: Yeah. It's not a fanzine. . .
JANSON: Well whatever it is. . .
GIORDANO: . . . a prozine isn't it?
JANSON: . . . a "prozine," yeah, big deal.
GIORDANO: I love these classifications.
JANSON: Yeah, what did you think of it?
GIORDANO: Good as far as it went.
JANSON: Well, how far did it go?
GIORDANO: I only saw one issue.
JANSON: That's all that came out.
GIORDANO: Well that's as far as it went (laughter).
JANSON: Oh, I thought you meant critically.
GIORDANO: I'm not a critic, and I don't think of myself as a critic. I agree with that statement of James Warren's ("There is no such thing as a moral or immoral comic book. Comics are either good or bad. That is all.")
JANSON: I thought your stand would be directly opposite that.
GIORDANO: Oh no. A good comic book is one that sells, or one that somebody likes. I say that Deadman was a good comic book, although it didn't sell. But a lot of people liked it very much. That's a good comic book.
JANSON: Would you ever like to do a strip and have it published in a zine like Abyss?
GIORDANO: (pause)
JANSON: . . .if you had the time. . .
GIORDANO: If I had the time, I'd like to do many things. Frank and I have 47 projects in the works.
JANSON: 47 projects. . .!?
GIORDANO: Yeah, that we have worked on exactly ZILCH! Because we're too busy earning a living. And we have (to Frank McLaughlin) I've spoken briefly, without giving anything away, about the adult material thing. (Back to Klaus.) We've got it all worked out over here (tapping his temple). . . well, we've put a couple of words down on paper, but that's as far as it's gotten.

Yeah, there are a lot of things I'd like to do if I had the time.
JANSON: You realize, of course, since you told me you have 47 projects in the works, I won't be able to sleep tonight.
GIORDANO: Would you be able to sleep if I told you there were really only 9?
(laughter)
McLAUGHLIN: That's worth a nap anyway. (laughter)
JANSON: How much inking does Frank McLaughlin do on your work?
GIORDANO: Everything from all of it to only the back grounds. He's doing all the Flash now. Oh incidentally (turning to Frank), Julie insisted on keeping my name on it, in addition to yours. He feels that's some sort of a selling point
JANSON: Oh, Frank--- you are actually getting credit for it?
GIORDANO: Yeah.
McLAUGHLIN: Right.
JANSON: That's amazing.
McLAUGHLIN: As long as they spell my name on the checks right. . . (laughter). . . I don't care. I haven't gotten credit, in what, 12 years now?
GIORDANO: Frank and I are working together now. Some jobs he just does backgrounds, that's the rarity these days. Most jobs he does backgrounds and some figures. On the Flash, he's been doing the whole thing. On the ones where he does some figures, it's those figures that are other than the main character, which I do. As I've gotten further into the penciling thing, I found that my regular assignments would be impossible to cover without more help than I was getting before. Frank and I have been working together (looking toward Frank) almost two years, now, eh?
McLAUGHLIN: (pause)
GIORDANO: One way or another, to some degree or another, sometimes he goes out working elsewhere. So whenever I get into a spot, Frank is the logical person to turn to.
JANSON: Er, Dick, have you been satisfied with the quality of your work in the past year?
GIORDANO: You say that so ominously.

No, I'd be a fool if I were. But for that matter, I'm not satisfied with any of the work that I've done in my 20 years in the business. Never satisfied. If anyone is satisfied with their work now or in the past year, he should immediately get out of the business; or of any artistic field.
Satisfaction leads to laziness and laziness leads to a downgrading of your work.
JANSON: So that's why when I called you up and said I was disgusted with myself you said, "good."
GIORDANO: Well, it's a question of putting it in the proper perspective. My lack of satisfaction in what I do has been around twenty years. I understand it and I cope with it. I live with it. I know that I will be completely dissatisfied with every job that I do, particularly at the time that I turn it in. I find that I am able to look at my stuff more objectively after it's printed than when I turn it in. In some of the cases, like the most recent Elongated Man that's been printed, I am more dissatisfied with it after it's been printed than when I did it.

For several reasons. One is that it was colored badly, in my opinion. And it was drawn very quickly; more quickly than I'm used to working. At the time, I convinced myself it was acceptable, and when I saw it printed, I was not at all happy with it.

But more often the reverse is true. I do a job I'm not satisfied with at the time I turn it in, but when I see it printed three months later, I'm able to view it as a third person, sort of. You know, like it's not mine anymore. I'm looking at a piece of artwork that appears in National magazines. Without any ego involved in the statments, I can look at something and say, "Hey,that's cool!" There's no ego in it, because it's not really mine, it's just . . .
JANSON: Yeah- - yeah . . .
GIORDANO: At the time that I do it, I recognize the fact that I can in no way be objective. Ask Frank. Very often we do an ink job, break our backs on it, then turn it in and, "Nyah,"— — it would've been better if we had another day or two. I always feel as though I haven't done top stuff and that my work is falling down. And then the job is printed and it looks just as good as any other job.
JANSON: Would you say that creative dry spells are common?
GIORDANO: Yeah, they're common, but as you live with them from year to year, you start to understand them and know that they're going to be there, and you stop worrying about them, and they come less frequently, and they last less in time when you do get one.

A dry spell can be brought on by any number of things. Doing too much work is the most common. You know, we've been breaking our backs for the past couple of weeks. If we had to ink a story now, today, we couldn't do a good job. It would be physically and mentally impossible to do a top-rate job right now. Cause we've just been burning the candles at both ends for too many weeks now.

We had a 35 page Gothic that Mike Sekowsky penciled, and we had a job that Neal was supposed to ink himself with very loose pencils that we had to pull back together a little bit; not as much as some of the other things , though. A Bob Brown story and a whole bunch of other things. We turned out a Bob Brown 14 pager in a couple of days because it was necessary from the deadline stand point. And it just worked out. Frank worked until 2:30 A.M. yesterday. I didn't work that late. I only worked till about 10 last night, but I saw him 6:30 in the morning.

Now this would be a dryspell. Frank is just sort of cruising today, working on a new project. We're going to discuss that after you go.
(laughter)
I'm making that point.
(laughter)
And, I'm working on a pencil job now and I just need that to clear the cob—webs out of my head, and so does Frank. We couldn't possibly do an ink job now.

Mental attitude is another thing. If everything goes wrong at home, and your wife is going to divorce you and your children have tuberculosis, and your car ran off a cliff, that affects your work, you know. It should.

JANSON: To change the subject subtly (again), what is your opinion of fandom?

GIORDANO: Aha! How many tapes have you got left!
(laughter)
Well . . . I like fandom for a lot of reasons, most of them have to do with my ego. We won't go into those because ego isn't what you're supposed to be interestd in today.
(laughter)
From a practical standpoint, I think fandom's biggest flaw is that they assume that their attitudes and opinions of material are universally shared. And they have never really been brought to task on that point— — making it clear to them that, fine, we respect your opinions . . .They are generally our opinions . . . But you're basing your opinions on the wrong set of values. You're looking at our material as an art form, and as adult material. We're trying to put together the stuff as a story for children. Children's literature is what it is.

So, you have an opinion about something. You like this book or you didn't like this book, you like this story or you didn't like this story. Everyone complains about Superman, as an example. We understand why you feel the way you do, and, for the most part, we share those feelings. But it usually has very little relevance with regard to, quote, "The Sale and Operation of a Comic Book Publishing Company," unquote. The publisher is interested in making a profit. And he really couldn't care less about our opinions or your opinions.

If fandom were to understand that its opinions were strictly its own, fine. But that's one maturity it hasn't yet achieved. They always assume that their opinions, are, as I said before, universally shared. And that's very far from the truth.

Nearly every book I edited was loved by the fans, judging by the letters I got and the comments I got at conventions. And every one of those books was rejected by the kids that buy comic books. Now that should tell you where your opinions lie; same as mine.

JANSON: That should also tell us, tho, that you should be editing an "adult"-type comic book.

GIORDANO: If you and your friends can come up with 25,000 dollars a year for my salary, I'd be glad to.

JANSON: Speaking of underground comix, what do you think of them?

GIORDANO: That's where they belong.
(laughter)
You want to know what I think of underground comix, seriously? I haven't read every one, but those that I've seen have been a rape. A rape of the freedom that these people have. They have the freedom to do anything that they want, and they've thrown it away.

They've thought of the most banal, the most boring material that they could come up with and they've done it in the most pornographic fashion.

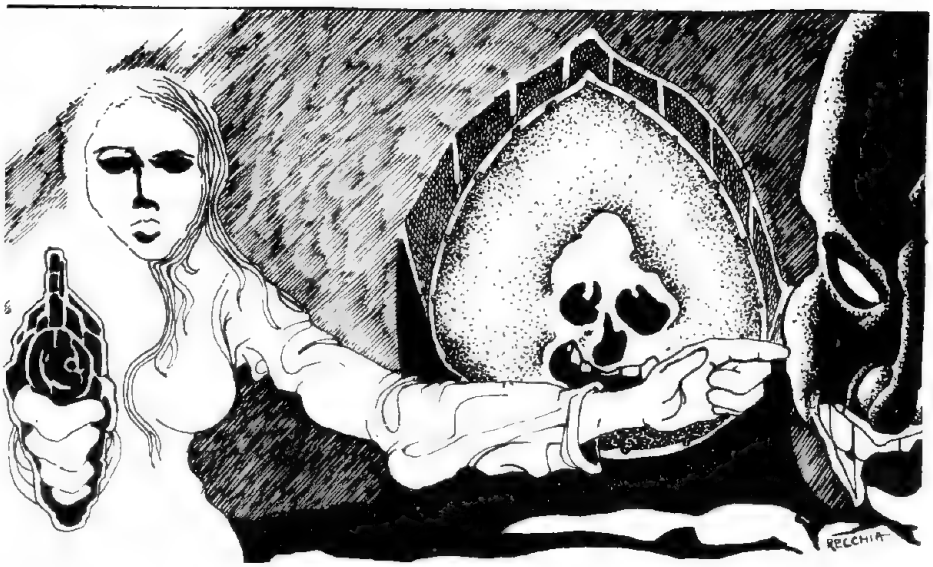
I don't really know why they feel that if they have freedom, they have to do something disgusting rather than something important.

. . .Let me get one thing straight: I'm not making my comments on the basis of taste. If pornography is what they want to do, fine, do it well. But they have this freedom, and they're doing it badly— — that's what I'm talking about. I'm back to the Warren statement; there's nothing immoral about the material. I'm not disgusted by it, I'm disgusted by the underground artists having the freedom and blowing it. They've got the freedom to do ANYTHING they want.

If you must do porno, do it right. Don't allow the worst artist and worst writer to do that kind of subject matter. Rather than doing porno better than ever before, it's being done in the same way porno has always been done: tastelessly. They're just doing it for the shock value, just to sell comic books. They're more establishment than we are because they have the freedom we would like to have and all they're doing is relying on shock value! They're relying on the kind of things that you see in bad television shows, you know; if you can't sing good, sing loud , and if you can't do anything else with a bad story, do a sex scene. If you have no story, just put in a lot of naked women and people will go see it anyways. Well that's what they're doing. They don't bother to get a good porno script and art. They just do it for its own value.

JANSON: What about nudity in a book like Vampirella?

GIORDANO: The stuff that's been done well is super, and the stuff that is done badly is tastless. There is just nothing like a nude woman drawn badly.
(laughter)
I mean, who wants to look at that? If you can't do it well, keep clothes on her, that's all. I have no objection to nudity; but it has to be done with taste. In some of the recent Warren mags it has been done well, but in some of the



earlier ones it was done for shock value, and was worthless, as far as I'm concerned.

JANSON: . . . what do you think of Marvel's horror books? Have you seen them, Dracula, Werewolf?

GIORDANO: I haven't read them, I've seen them. I'm generally against that kind of stuff; not because Marvel's doing it, but because I'm very aware of the pressures that can be brought to bear onto a weak publishing industry.

As an example, Wertham's book is being re—issued.

JANSON: It is?

GIORDANO: Yeah. Frederic Wertham's Seduction of the Innocent is being reissued.

JANSON: Reissued?

GIORDANO: Hardcover. Immediately after Marvel came out with those two books. I don't really know if there is any connection. All I know is that as soon as the Code has relaxed a little bit, Wertham's book is coming out again. I can only suspect there is a connection.

JANSON: Do you think the Code is detrimental or helpful to comics?

GIORDANO: Helpful.

Because the actual Code is just one small part of the entire operation. The rest of the operation is public relations, and they do a great job there. They have a newspaper clipping service that scans every newspaper in the country. Anything that's written about the comics is sent along to the Code office and subsequently sent along to various publishers. So that we can count the bad publicity, which we do. That's another function of the office.

The office of the Comics Code administrator, Leonard Darvin, answers any articles or written material that is derogatory to our interests. He answers them all, and , in the language of the publisher, sort of counters wherever he can, the bad publicity that the comics are getting.

JANSON: What do you think of Will Eisner?

GIORDANO: He's probably the forerunner of today's story telling techniques. Almost everything came from Will Eisner as far as story telling is concerned. I can't think of anybody else who has contributed as much to the comic art form as Will Eisner has.

JANSON: What was the purpose in forming the Academy of Comic Book Arts (ACBA)?

GIORDANO: Insanity!

(laughter)

The purpose in forming the Academy, I mean, I can read the constitution to you, but I don't really think that'll help you because it's stated in very vague terms. But the purpose was the desire to get the people in the industry together, regularly, to discuss common problems and to see, short of collective bargaining with publishers, what could be done to solve those problems.

The common problems would not necessarily be those of the artists or writers, but, theoretically, according to our constitution, should include publishers' problems, distributors' problems and so forth. It's supposed to be an industry wide organization, not necessarily restricted to artists and writers.

JANSON: Has that worked out?

GIORDANO: Those were the aims. We haven't done anywhere near as much as we could've done to further those aims, for a variety of reasons.

The main problem that we've encountered, and, I think, the one responsible for all of the other problems is that the people who are in a position to do something constructive are the members of the Board of Governors and people like Stan Lee and Carmine Infantino. The Board of Governors now consists of myself and Neal Adams, Victor Gorelick, who is editor and production manager at Archie, Archie Goodwin, Roy Thomas, Gil Kane, Mimi Gold and Sal Amendola.

The people in power of this organization are the busiest people in the business, the people who have the least time to devote to this organization. These are also the people who will benefit least by what will come out of this organization. Motivation isn't as strong as it should be despite our good intentions.

My motivation is probably weakened by the fact that I know I can strike up a pretty good deal by myself, and I don't really need, unfortunately, as much as some of the other people. I recognize the need of the younger people, and for that reason, I have accepted this job, and I try to do it. But if I have a Board of Governors meeting Thursday night, and I have to do a rush job for the same night, I may have to call off the Board of Governors meeting. I can't really turn down the job from National because it wouldn't be fair to them or to my family.

What it amounts to, really, is burning the candle at both ends, and I've come to the point now where if I'm nominated again, I'd have to decline. Simply because I know I can't do the job I should be doing. Neither can Stan Lee, Roy Thomas, Gil Kane, Neal Adams or any other people likely to be nominated in my place. These are the busiest guys in the business, and they don't have the time to do all that should be done. Get this straight: I'm not all that negative about ACBA. We NEED this organization — — it must be made to work. I'm frustrated and impatient because limitations of time and money make the whole thing so damned slow.

I think Jim Warren summed up our problems a bit when he said the organization needs a dictator at its helm . . . a guy to lay down the rules. To take decisions out of the hands of the relatively few people who make decisions now . . . just to get started! And it needs someone who can devote full time to it or close to full time.

We've been thinking of hiring someone who can work full time, and we checked out our treasury and found we'd thave to raise five thousand dollars more than we have available.

JANSON: Well you could hire me real cheap.

GIORDANO: We've thought about that, not you specifically, but we've thought about it. Our intentions were to hire an interested fan, who wasn't working, and would like to get into the business this way. But the fact is, we would still have to raise a great deal more money than we have available.

We hope the situation will improve somewhat. Neal and I are going to open up an office very shortly. And we hope that having that facility will be helpful. The Academy doesn't have an office now. We don't have a phone answered by a member of the Academy. We have a phone answering service, and they'll take messages and pass them onto us, but sometimes two or three days pass before the message is passed on and action is taken.

We get letters that we can't always answer. We get any number of letters that could do us some good if we only had somebody there that would open the letter as soon as it came in, refer him or her to the concerned member and try to make the thing work. It is just that we have to do it on a part time basis.

We have a board meeting weekly. We spend three or four hours together. And we try to do as much in that time as we can. It takes time to decide what we want to do and more time to do it. Which is good. The people who make these decisions are very deliberate. There is no bickering going on, and we try to do what is best.

JANSON: Well, what HAVE you accomplished, at least during your administration?

GIORDANO: I don't know if I can answer that; there is one thing that happened, that I believe had something to do with the fact that our organization exists, but I can't prove it. And I'd have to involve a major company in making the claim, so I'm not going to. We have opened international dialogue and are in touch with foreign cartoonist organizations. We've got an art show traveling around the Western part of this country. I'm sorry to say the name of the show is "Comics as an Art Form."

JANSON: Ha — Ha

GIORDANO: Well, I can't be held accountable for the feelings of some professor.

(laughter)

The head of the Department of Art at the University of Las Vegas, Nevada wrote me a while ago and asked me for material for the show, and he showed me where it would be shown. And it was going to be at a number of major western and midwestern colleges, schools, and so forth. And we assembled twenty—five odd pieces of material and sent it to him.

He's had it for quite some time now. And he recently wrote that they expect the show to be traveling another six months to a year. And, there's been such great interest in the show that he's asked for permission to make film slides of the show so that many of the universities could have slides for their archives.

And that's what our Academy is for, to promote our business, to answer the critics of the comics industry in a positive way, as creators who love the comic form, not just publishers for financial reasons.

JANSON: Do you think fandom has any role in ACBA?

GIORDANO: Just a supporting one, at present. Only because there are too many things that take place at business meetings and board meetings that we would be afraid to include fans. If we could be selective about fandom, yes, it would be different. If I could say, "Yeah, Klaus Janson and a couple of the other really serious minded young adults can come," I'd say fine.

But there is no way to be selective. There'd be a bunch of kids hanging around asking for autographs.

(laughter)

I mean look, these kids are "celebrity" conscious to one degree or another, and if you're going to have an Academy meeting with everybody that's anybody in the comic book business, it would only stand to reason that fans would get pesky.

We thought about several things. We've been thinking of tying in with one of the newsletter fanzines on the West Coast. We thought we might make, not supporting memberships, but honorary memberships to some fanzines or fanzine editors who, we would feel, be a little bit more mature. But we haven't come to any conclusions on that.

JANSON: Isn't that a rather strong statement for you to make, saying ther are some fans who are pesky? I mean someone in your position, I would expect to be a little more careful in wha you publicly say about fandom. You're sure to get some backlash from those same pesky fans.

GIORDANO: You're beginning to sounc like that gang of Indians in Massachuset ts that decided Indians should always b the good guys on television. Klaus, let's be realistic. I go to a lot of these fan conventions; if I were that down on fans I wouldn't go to them. But the fact is there are some fans that are pests. There are pros that are pests,too. But there would be no way to contro the fans at an ACBA meeting. Even if there was one pest in a group of 40 that came to our meeting, it would blow the meeting.

There is no way to make a distinction. We can't say, "all fans are invited as long as they are not pesky." We are concerned, but we DO have to take care of some business at meetings. We thought of ways of inviting the more responsible elements of fandom, but we don't know of a way to do it that would not be insulting to some of the others. So we haven't taken any actio on the idea because of this.

Also, you know as well as I do that there are some people that go to these conventions just for the money. They'r just there to sell their wares, they're n really fans. They don't really give a good goddamn about me or the comic business. They just have things to sell. There are others who go to cons witl material to sell that they shouldn't sell; like artwork that doesn't belong to the And these things irritate us. Unfortunat it's a "fan" convention, and everybody there is thought of as a fan.

I don't really know if this pesky kid that gave me a hard time last year was really a member of any organized fan group. All I know is that it was at a fan convention and he bothered the hell out of me. That's just an imaginary kid, I don't remember anyon in particular.

JANSON: Understand, I'm not debating or berating your. . .uh. . . estimation c some fans as pesky. I'm just wondering if that is a wise thing to say public relations—wise. I happen to agree with you. I've met a lot of fans who think they're the greatest thing since sliced bread. But then I've met a lot of peop that way who have become my best of friends.

It's those few with their holier than

thou attitude . . . you know, "How dare you callme pesky, whatI'm doing is so serious.," . . .the fate of the world hangs in the balance if they get their zine out or not.

GIORDANO: Well it IS serious to them, and I have no intentions of taking that away from them. The holier than thou attitude is the one I was talking about before. That irritates the hell out of me, because they assume they're right.

All I know is, Frank and I have situations cast upon us that have very little to do with appreciation of comics as an art form. We are forced to do jobs-bummers— that we really have no interest in, and we have a tight deadline to do it in. You sit down and put a brush between your toes, so you can get as many things going as possible.

And you get the job out, and they say, "thank you," and they pay you for it and then some fanzine comes out with a critique of the job.
(laughter)
You know that's really the last thing I need, right?

JANSON: Yeah, but . . .

GIORDANO: Okay. And given the opp-ortunity, they'll burn me in effigy for a job that I had no interest in, didn't want to do, and had to do overnight. And then you have somebody say, "Oh boy, he really bombed out on that one."

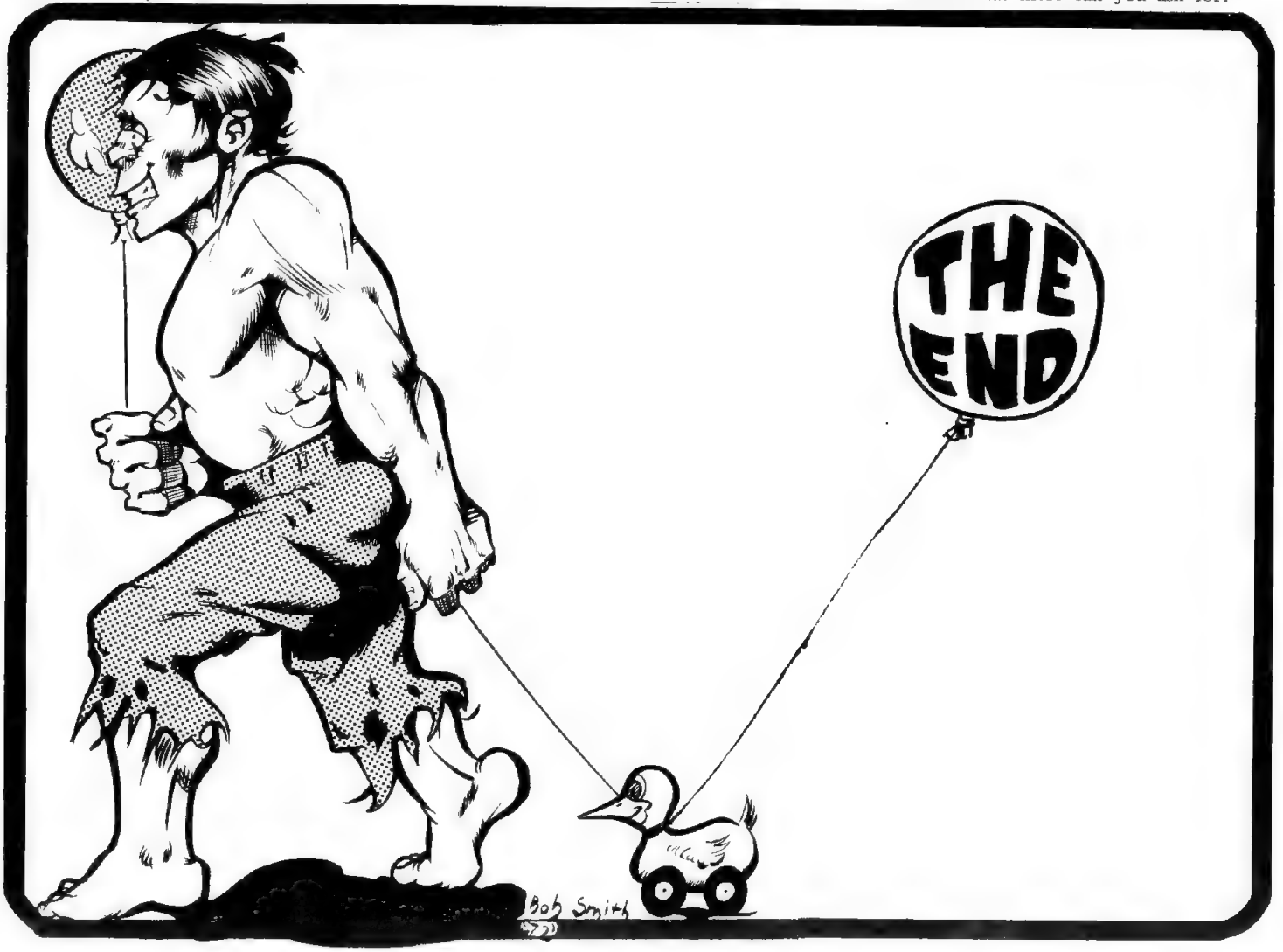
Well, it's just like everything else. If you don't know enough about it, you should be a little restrained in your comments. I never hang up on you when you call me up, right? If you want to ask me a question, you can. If somebody sees something they don't like and want to know about it, call me up. Call up National or write me a letter or something. I'll tell you what the story was, if you're interested.

JANSON: Okay. Now, I remember I asked you this about four years ago, and you said, "Forget it," but, what advice would you give to an aspiring artist or writer?

GIORDANO: Be a plumber.

McLAUGHLIN: No, be an electrician, he makes more money.

GIORDANO: I'll give you some advice as long as we exclude a few people from taking that advice. If you're not really terribly serious about it or terribly dedicated to drawing comics exclusively, don't bother. Because there are so many drawbacks once you get in, and it's so difficult to get in, that, unless you have that particular type of dedi-cation, it'd be a wasted effort even to try. You really do have to love this more than anything else in the world, as a start. Only because you're going to have to put up with an awful lot of nonsense. It's hard to get in, there aren't that many companies buying stuff. No matter which kind of art you do, you can go to National, Marvel and a little bit of Charlton. Where else do you go? Gold Key!
That's it, that's the entire market. If you do humor stuff, you have Archie, Harvey and, to some degree, Charlton. That's your entire humor market.
Now you are faced with 5 or 6 pub-lishers, who have a fairly full staff of artists now. You have to depend on them getting out of the business or dying in order for you to get in.
You have to have awfully good stuff to even be able to talk to them.
And after you've gone through all of that and you're relatively secure in this niche that you've carved, you're still going to be underpaid, underappreciated and, as a final indignity, insulted by fans who think the last work you did was pretty cruddy.
(laughter)
Now what more can you ask for?



FROM READING TO WRITING

IN THE BEGINNING . . .

When I was a child, back in the '50's, I was particularly interested in the Carl Barks Donald Duck strip; Walt Disney's Comics and Stories was a particular favorite. For some reason obscure to me now, I was also very much interested in the Dick Tracy comic book [the book featured reprints from the newspaper strip]. I also read super-heroes and mystery, and everything else I could get my hands on. Like just about every child who is really big on comics, I did my own strips. In addition to Mickey Mouse comics which I copied, I did my own super-hero and mystery stories.

I turned off to comics when I was thirteen. As I remember, the thing that really got me off them was a letter in Superboy somewhere which asked why Superboy didn't fight the communists. The editor responded to this letter by saying that Superboy didn't get involved in political matters. Upon reading this, I decided that comics were irrelevant and that I was too old for this sort of tripe.

Although I kept with my drawing, it wasn't until I was in college that I got back into comics.

I WAS A COLLEGE-AGED FANATIC

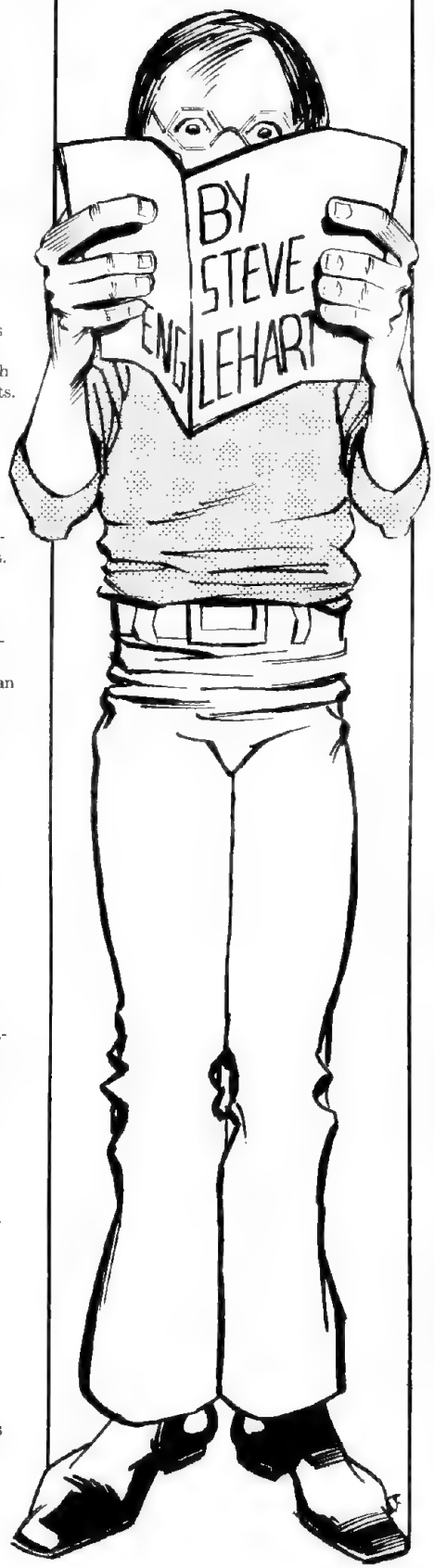
In 1966, when Batman came on television, I recalled that I used to have a good time with comic books, so I went out and bought a Batman comic. I thought it was rotten. I was about to swear off comics then and there, but a friend gave me a Spiderman to read, and I really enjoyed it. Since Marvel's comics were interrelated I soon got into all the other Marvels. I then went back and selected the DCs that I liked. From there on I went on to be the type of fanatic who would go down every Tuesday and Thursday and would open up the bundles for the newsdealer. I've been hooked ever since.

PRODOM HERE I COME!

Upon becoming a comics fanatic in college, I really became totally infatuated with the whole comics scene. I went to college near Derby Connecticut [where the offices of Charlton are located], and on one very rainy friday afternoon, I hitch-hiked over to the Charlton offices. Luckily for me, I caught Dick Giordano with absolutely nothing going on, and Dick, being the incredibly nice guy he is, sat down for the rest of the afternoon and talked with me.

Nine months later, when Dick moved to his editorial post at DC, I continued from then on to hang around National to see Dick and also to meet a lot of other pros.

Soon after I graduated from college, the Army came and got me. Finally, they sent me down to a base in Maryland. On a three day pass, I went back to my old college in Connecticut just to visit with some friends. While I was there, I met Wayne Howard [then Wally Wood's assistant] who was an undergraduate there. I talked with him , and we pretty nearly disagreed on everything . One valuable thing he said, though, was that he really dug working with Woody- because he learned so much from him.



I was going to spend the rest of the time in New York seeing Dick, and I brought some samples just to show him how I was progressing. On the way down to New York, though, I remembered what Wayne Howard said about working with professionals, and I decided that I really would like to work with Neal Adams as his assistant.

So, I went down to DC and hung around all day long waiting for Neal to get a break. Finally I tracked him down in the hall and I asked him if he needed an assistant. He told me, "Well, I never use assistants, but let me see your stuff." Caught by surprise, I told him that I didn't have anything with me, even though I did. But the sutff I had was just to show to Dick,it wasn't to show to Neal Adams to get a job!

I went home and stayed up all night drawing like crazy----retouching and reworking the stuff. I went in the next day and showed him the work. Neal looked at it and he said, "Well let me tell you . . ." At that point somebody came out and said, "Carmine wants to see you Neal." So Neal left and told me that I should wait for him until he came back. He went away for aproximately an hour and a half, and I was going crazy waiting for him.He finally came back and he said, "You know, it really isn't very good, but you do have a few good things here. ---I've got this Vampi strip and I'd like you to work with me on it." That made me more or less his first and only assistant.

That was in February of 1970. And up until October when I got out of the army, I came up to N.Y. on about ninety-five per cent of my free weekends to work with Neal (in addition to some other things once the Vampi strip was finished). I would drive forty miles to Wilmington, hop on a train, come to New York, get to National just as they were closing Friday afternoon, work all night with Neal, sleep at a friend's place at Columbia, come back to Neal's house on Saturday, draw draw draw draw,go back to Columbia late Saturday night, catch a train back to Maryland on Sunday, and then go back and be a soldier. This is how the Vampirella story came about [the story he is referring to is, "The Soft, Sweet Lips of Hell"].

Working with Neal on that strip was an incredible learning experience. Besides teaching me the basics such as anatomy and composition, he also taught me an entire theory of how to do comics. Working with Neal was as great as it was because he let me do a little of everything; I did breakdowns and he did finished pencils, he did the breakdowns and I did finished pencils, he inked the figures and I inked the backgrounds, and then I inked the figures and he inked the backgrounds. He didn't treat me like most assistants in that he really gave me an important hand in the job. He just didn't restrict me to ruling borders and things of that nature which most assistants do. In addition, Neal also insisted that when the job was finished my name be put on it. Which is ridiculous. Nobody ever gives an assistant any billing.

Steve Englehart is assistant editor at Marvel. In addition, he also writes numerous scripts for them and does free-lance work within and without the field. This feature is the result of an interview with him.::Dave & Klaus

THE BIG RUSH

I went from an aspiring nobody to working with Neal Adams virtually overnight. From February to July I just busted my ass every weekend work-on that thing. Neal refused to work without me; he never did anything when I wasn't there. It was an incredible learning process and I really put everything that I had into it. It was a big chunk of my life: five months.

We turned it on in July third and it didn't come out until the following Autumn. So it was another five months from when it left my hands from when I saw it again. I knew it was going into Vampirella and we turned it in on time to make issue number eight. But it didn't go into issue eight, so I thought, "Ah—ha, it's going to be in Vampi nine." But it didn't go into number nine either. Finally, in Vampirella ten, after all these months of waiting IT WAS THERE. And so: FLASH! I had this incredible rush; because it was such a part of me and I had waited so long to see it.

THE BIG APPLE

After I got out of the Army that October, I came up and moved in with Rich Buckler, Chuck Mc—Naughton and Jack Katz in an apartment up in the Bronx. I had no money, but I was picking up work here and there doing romance stuff for National, and also some strips for Skywald and Warren.

When National went to the twenty-five cent size they hired me to do a lot of the production work that had to be done on the reprints. It was just general scat work, nothing spectacular; but I was learning all the time. In addition to this, I was also doing romance and mystery stories.

The pay while I worked at National was rotten— — it was really ridiculous. But you live within your means. I had to pay for food and rent— — that's all I had to do; I was getting comic books free. So, my only necessities were rent and food, and I al—ways had enough for that; at the time I never had too much more, though. In fact, sometimes I had to go pretty hungry in order to save up for rent; but I survived.

DRINKING WITH MARVEL

I'd gotten to know Gary Friedrich at a party and we'd gotten to be "old drinking buddies"(with Gary, you could become "old drinking buddies" after two parties). So when Gary and his wife went back to Missourri for the summer, Gary called me up out of the blue and asked me if I wanted to take his job at Marvel for the summer. My financial situation being what it was I agreed to his offer immediately.

I started proofreading and editing for Marvel, and in addition, I was also doing art corrections. Although they liked the job I was doing, I realized that when Gary came back they'd probably get rid of me. When Gary returned, though, he told me that he had decided to stay out in Missourri, and that his job was now mine permanently. So it worked out.

WORKING LIKE A BEAST

As the weeks went by, I was doing an increasing amount of editorial work, and I got to be Roy Thomas' right hand man. Then one day Roy came up to me and he said,"It's sort of a tradition started with Allyn Brodsky. Would you like to write something for us?" That's how I got to do my first Beast story. As it turned out, everybody liked it. In fact, I was mindblown to hear that Tony Isabella, one of the more pugnacious fans, called Roy Thomas long distance and told him how much he liked the script.

Everybody up at Marvel was very impressed with the job I was doing on the "Beast," and when the recent expansion here left some books open they gave me The Defenders to write. Marvel liked that also so they gave me Captain America to write.

THE WEIRD TRIP

So, here I am working at Marvel as Roy's assistant. As it is right now, Roy's increasingly getting a lot to do here. Consequently, I am increasingly getting a lot to do. I proof read, edit, color, do art cor—rections, design logos.

As strange as it might seem, I've turned from a budding artist to a writer. Although I still really like art, I'm not accomplished at it yet— — the first time Dick Giordano saw my art samples, I had also written a script to go along with the work, and he said,"Stick with writing kid." Of course, I didn't listen to him. The thing is this: even though I first wanted to become an artist, I've also always liked to write; in fact, I really like to do everything. Coloring , designing, drawing, writing, editing. People ask me, "Are you an artist or are you a writer?" I'm neither. I'm a comic book person.

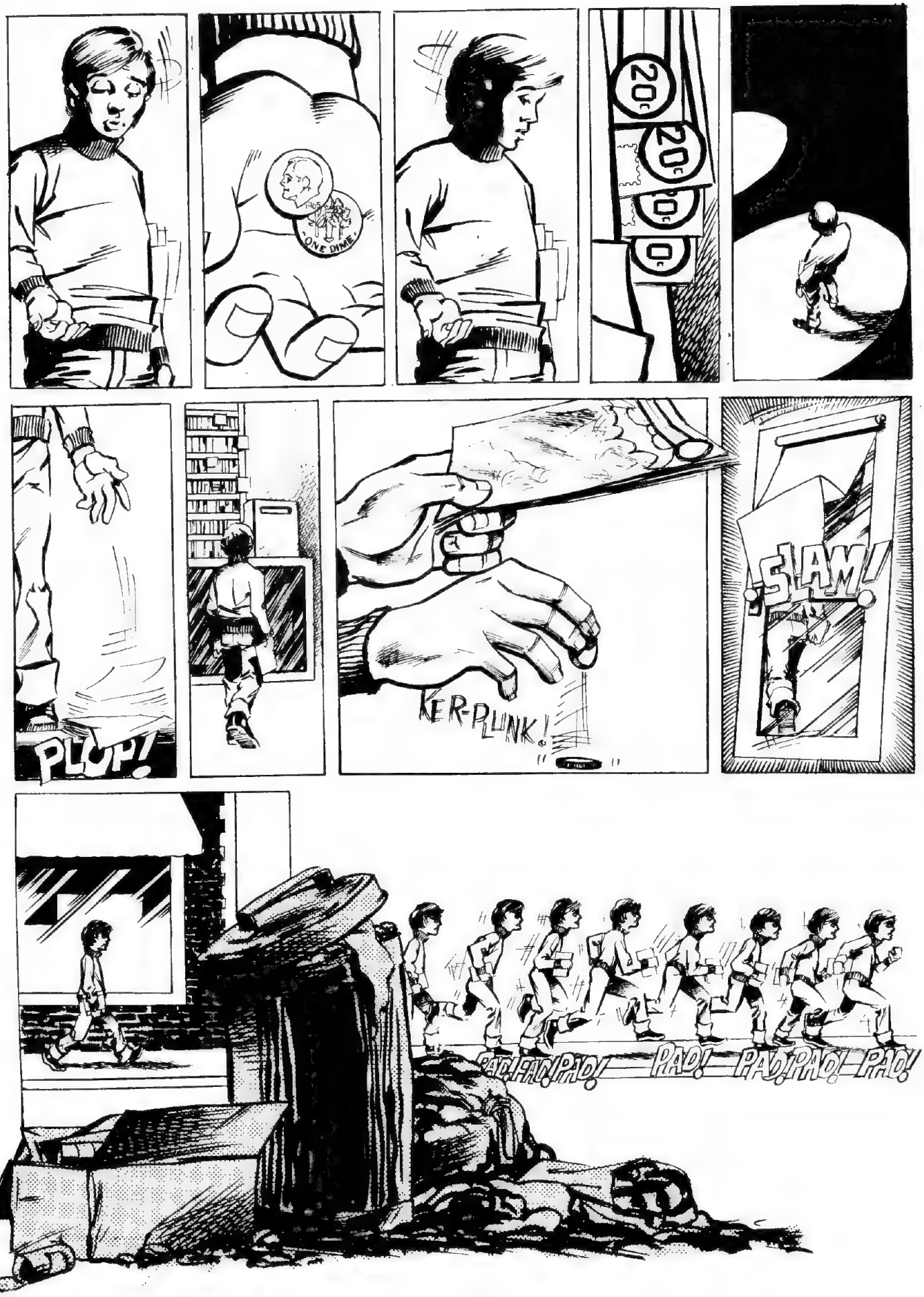
MARVELOUS NATIONALISMS

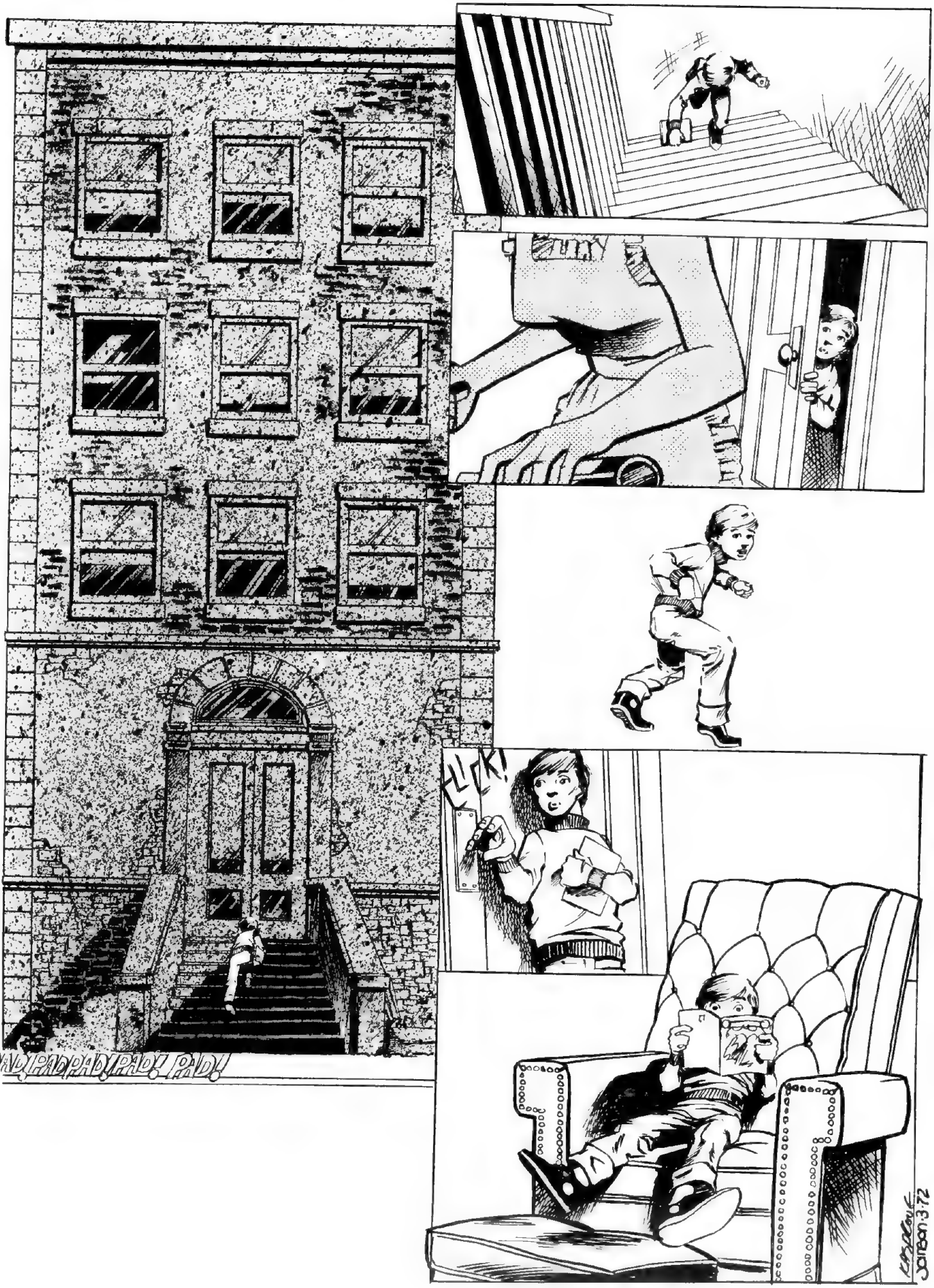
To me, National seems very cold and very compartmentalized. I have the feeling at DC that there are some very good people over there who have absolutely no direction to go in. People say that Marvel is locked into a formula, which to an extent is true. But National is locked into nothing. Which means they can produce really great stuff like the Green Lantern series. But they also can produce a lot of crap. And as far as I'm concerned, that's what they do. I find that seventy per cent of the stuff that they put out is totally uninteresting to me. As I've said, I've worked for both companies and I'm not a Marvel acolyte. They just don't interest me. They just seem very dull and very low-oriented. As I say, at the same time DC can hit very high points, and there are some books of DC's that I love. But basically , I don't think much of their product. I think that to a large extent it is because they have these great silent halls with silent offices; everybody's cut off from every—body else. If you want a job done you've got to send it to another department, production is very jealous of its rights over there. They now call themselves NPP Incorporated. It's this company, it's not really people. Conversely, working at Marvel in these very small offices, if I want something done I walk around the petition and ask— — or I do it myself. Nobody's telling me that I can't do art corrections on my own book. It's dumb, but we're all friends over here; even though everybody thinks it's old and cliche, it really isn't. I think Marvel's a much more fun company to work for. And I also happen to like their product better.

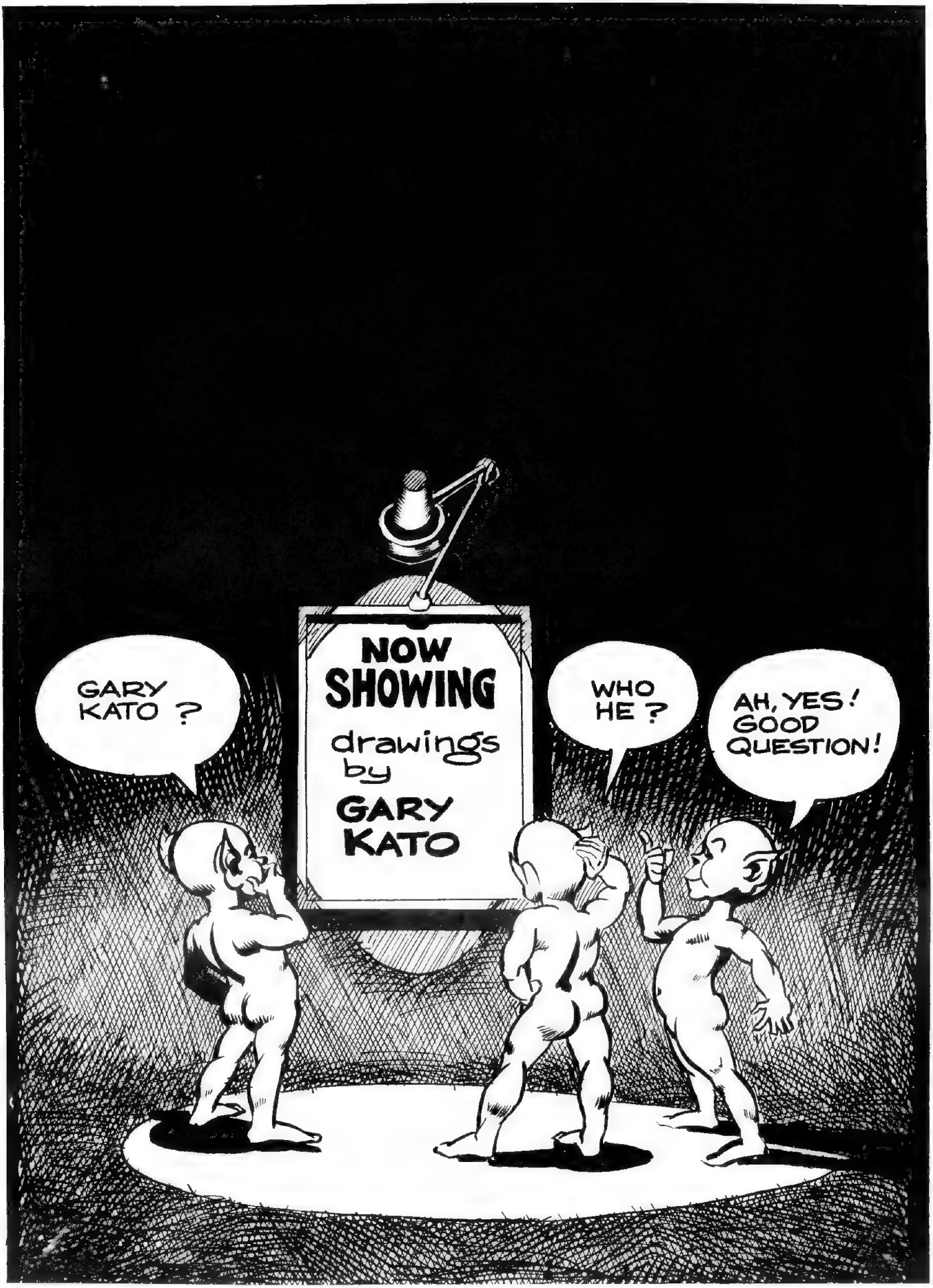
FUJITAKE '72

MA & PA STORE

MA & PA STORE
BINK
TUNK
TING TINGLE
JINGLE JINGLE


ONE DIME
20¢
20¢
PLOP!
KER-PLUNK!
SLAM!
PAD! PAD! PAD! PAD! PAD! PAD!


PAD! PAD! PAD! PAD! PAD! PAD!
LICK!
JAIRO 3.72


NOW SHOWING
drawings by
GARY KATO
GARY KATO ?
WHO HE ?
AH, YES! GOOD QUESTION!

KATO '71

KATO '71

KATO '72

FOR TRADE- THE OLD SUPER HEROES

by TOM GREENIONES

What made the popularity of the super heroes so great in the 1960s and why is that popularity so obviously on the decline in the 1970s? Since it was increased sales among high school and college kids that made the change, it figures we must look at their changing needs.

Along with the usual stage of adolescent rebellion that every generation goes thru, the kids of the 60s were part of an additional struggle. They were caught up in and contributed to the momentum of rebellion against established norms on all fronts that climaxed in the sixties. New hair lengths, new talk, new highs, new clothes, new attempts at organizing people and capital into alernative life styles; all became the reason detre of youth in the decade past. These political causes were seen as heroic and righteous and they sanctified the new character of the decade.

What would costumed super heroes as apparent upholders of old-style law and order have to do with this? Let's take a look. It goes beyond just their natural born heroes in a heroic time. Super heroes as we know them recieved their original impetus in the early 1940s and were boosted sky high by the war. At that time, the USA saw itself as the champion of the free world taking on most of the responsibility to protect freedom from the widespread forces of evil. Our self proclaimed mission was to smash the Axis Powers into the dust of defeat. In tune with the feeling of this crusade, we were prepared to take any chances and use any weapons that would serve the cause; and we did. Without exception, all superheroes, not just the overtly patriotic ones, reflected this inflated emotionalism which became a national attitude. This attitude found a close affinity with the mythic potential of the heroes and gave them a high measure of definition within it.

But as this emotionalism was made obsolete by new realities in the late 40s and 50s, the super heroes lost their collective soul and became paler and paler imitations of themselves; a dying breed. However, the definition given by the original emotions was so strong that the heroes retained it up into the early 60s as their strongest identity. That's why they began fighting all those communists even though we had lost interest.

But as the new emotionalism of the sixties developed, only a change of emphasis was needed to revitalize their potential for reinterpetation of myth.

The Marvel heroes, if not exactly typical of all heroes of the last decade, were by far the most relevant and we can make a useful generalization of them.In contrast to the 40s heroes like Superman, Batman, or Sub-Mariner who either were born super, had lots of energy, or calmly accepted that process that gave them their powers no matter how bizarre ["Of course I've been made super! It is to better fulfill my destiny as an American!"], the latter breed were violently transformed, by accident, by powerful unknown forces, without their consent. The Hulk, up to that time, was a successful scientist who accidently was caught in a bomb blast and soaked with radiation; Spiderman was accidently bitten by a spider which made him feel worse than ever; Iron Man was shot in Viet Nam and given a new heart run by electricity; and the Fantastic Four were waylaid by a burst of radiation in outer space, hurled to the earth in a wrecked space ship, and turned into ghastly freaks.

The transformation of the Fantastic 4 is pivotal to understanding the shift of emphasis that was brought about in the super hero legend. They were turned into freaks; marked and made very different from ordinary people. But soon after the transformations, all these characters got around to dressing up in costumes and displaying their freakishness publicly. This leads us to think that underlying their initial horror was a strong desire to be different from the crowds, extravagantly different, throw-it-in-their-teeth different. This would be only the folly of a nut of a comic book writer if the books sold poorly. But as they rocketed to successs it was clear that the desires embodied in the heroes must have been close to the hearts of many readers.

Each of the heroes can be understood both on the level of plot and on a level symbolic of contemporary mass attitudes within the readership. The Hulk survives the ups and downs of his mistreatment at the hands of man by accepting and often glorying in his own monstrousness. He makes no bones about it. All he asks is to be left alone and not be discriminated against for being different. He is not a destructive guy and would prefer to live in peace. On the second level, the Hulk neatly represents the vigorous and elemental vitality of youth in its expansive and immature adolescent period. His acceptance of being an outcast from a conformist society and the fatalistic confrontation with irrational military types who want to either destroy or enslave his power are both parallel to attitudes in the forefront of youthful setiment of the time.

Peter Parker discovers he has unnatural and spectacular talents after being bitten by a radioactive spider. Peter is a sensitive individual who feels ambivalent about participating in the superficial games of his high school schoolmates. But rather than seeinghis powers as another set of unacceptable personal habits, fantasies, or pleasures, he makes the most of his stellar talents to release his frustrations.

He wears a colorful costume and appears on the Ed Sullivan show. But running alongside of the story is a commentary about the penalties of flagrant and irresponsible egoism. The effect on Peter capitalizing commercially on his freak powers is to make him arrogant and cynical which directly results in the death of his beloved Uncle Ben. Except for Daredevil, this early episode in Spiderman prescribed a humbler attitude for the heroes than they ever took in the 40s and a more humane attitude about other people.

Thor is a god in ancient Norse mythology and by rights is supposed to wear long hair, carry a weapon, and wear a battle costume. But this is just a clever device on author Lee's part to get close to and satisfy another real fantasy of the 60s youth. At one time, as you might recall, a kid walking down the street with long hair, belled pants, and paisely shirt was considered quite daring. It made him very vulnerable to all sorts of criticism ranging from being called a communist to a homosexual. Thor satisfied the fantasy kids had of walking down public streets dressed in the most outrageous costume and hair (But with style!) and be respected for it. And if anyone dared criticize you, a flip of the hammer was enough to command awed respect. Thor was the superlatively dignified freak.

The fun of discovering the two sides of the other Marvel heroes I will leave to other fans. The point has been made sufficiently for this article. It is these symbolic reflections of what was in the minds of kids at the time, as much or more than anything that made the Marvel heroes successful.

But in 1972,the Marvel heroes as originated are definately on the way down. In place of the strong plotting and relatively intricate character development of before, the current product has lost most all of its craft and grip on coherant characters. The stories are no more than excuses for interminable fight scenes. Could the answer to this also lie in the times? The 70's have shown in two years that this decade won't continue in the character of the 60's. They are proving to be a reaction against the shrill note sustained before. For all the progress we will make this time around, this will not be another heroic decade.

My own feeling about the tone of this decade. is that we will try to transcend the idea of belonging to one or the other of two hostile camps. We are tired of talk about the generation gap and the misunderstanding it allows as well as talk between liberals and conservatives as to who is right. Instead, we will try to take the best ideas on constructing a new and better society from all sides and try to make a synthesis of them that we can all subscribe to. Many aspects of the Hip Counter Culture are already firmly instituted in the mass culture. Communal living and food cooperatives, that were radical concepts a few years ago, are now taken for granted universally. The former new clothing and hair styles are The Establishment now. The idea that we are dressing more naturally and without attempting to shock one group or another, is consistant with an ideal of the future that is slowly coming to be held by increasing numbers: to avoid conflict and concentrate on our collective underlying unity in our search for peace. We have learned the lesson of the 60's about the rights of the individual. The aggresively self assertive super hero who helped us find metaphors for that awareness now clashes harshly with our new desire for cooperation and harmony.

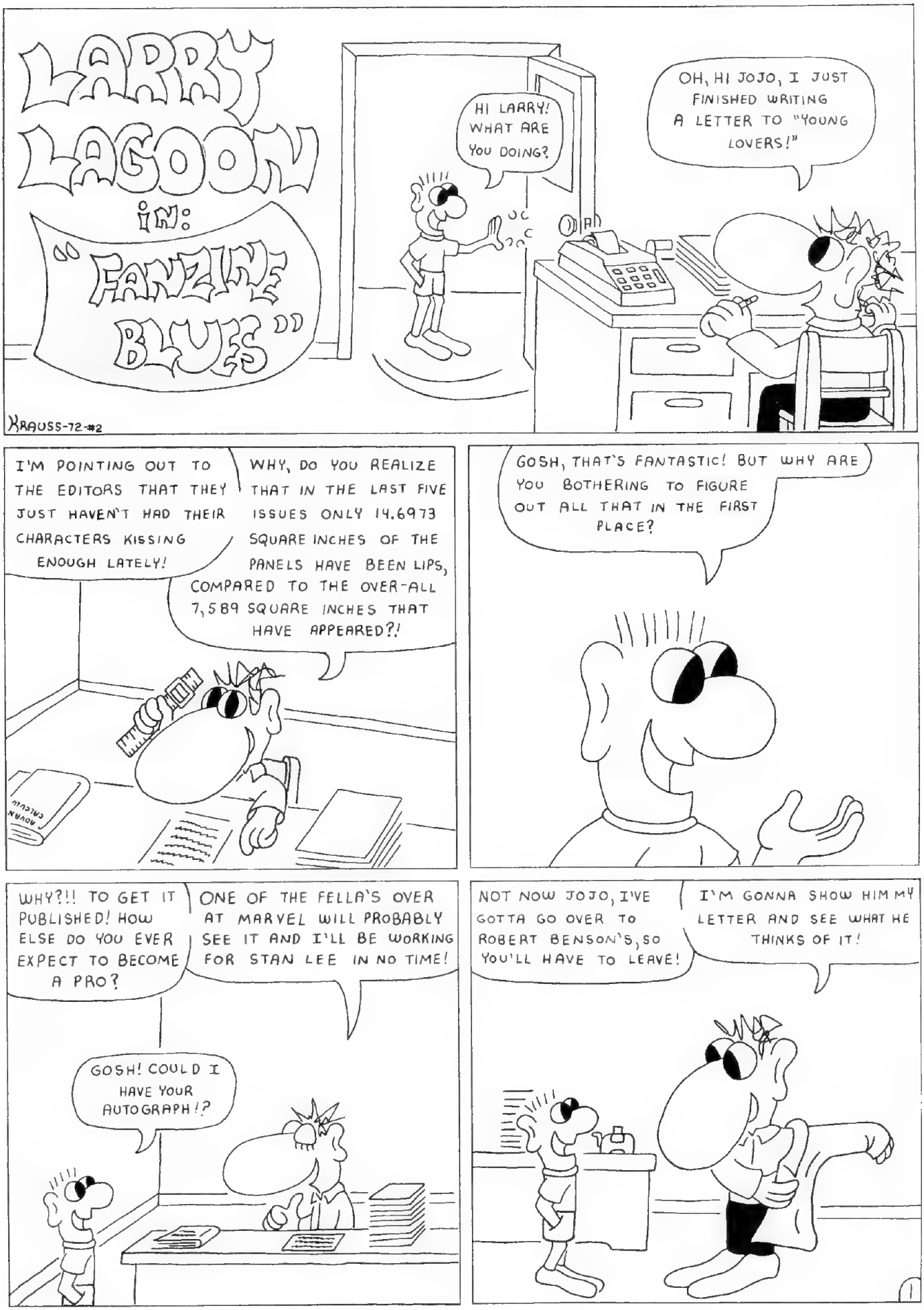
It's a credit to Jack Kirby that his books are generally a success. Kirby has always been Mr. Super—Hero Artist to everyone. Most fans probably think that his books are selling because they are just what Marvel would have been doing if they hadn't lost the ball. Actually, his characters are a definate departure from the old Marvel mold. As individuals, none of the New Gods or Forever people (or Mister Miracle) are strong personalities. Their consciousness of themselves is more a part of a larger homogenous group. For example, their strong sense of group loyalty could be seen when Darkseid split up the group in Forever People6 and 7. The young gods in New Genesis petitioned High Father to reunite the Forever People so they could participate in the mission the whole society was engaged in. And when they were reunited, the relief was more heartfelt than in similar scenes in the Fantastic Four. No. Kirby has not only beat Marvel at their own game,he has gone on to discover and claim for himself the area in which the super hero can still be relevant in the 70's.

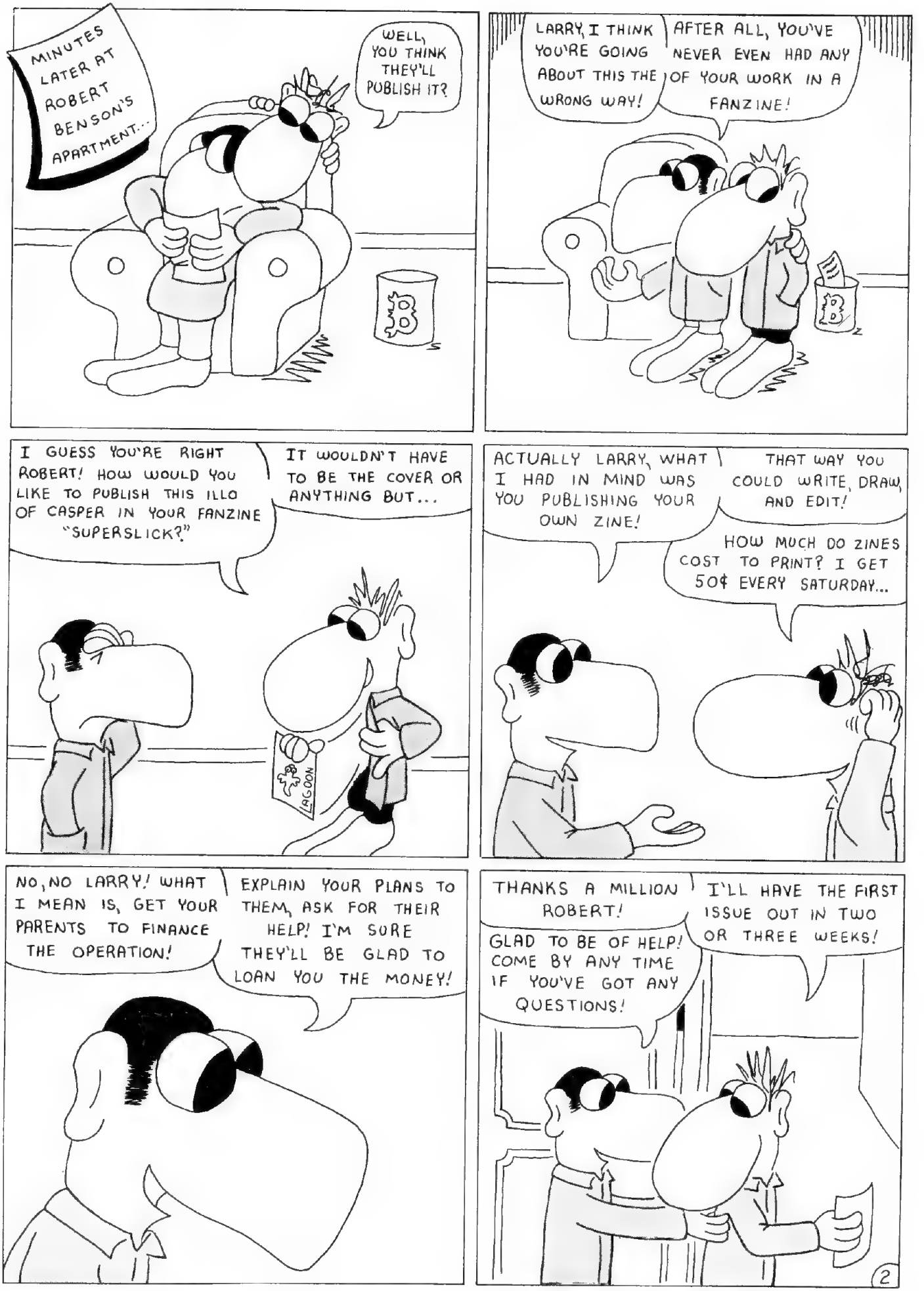
Another change moving us away from the super hero is our reaction against the 'slam bang' of the decade just past. We desire more subtle and sophisticated entertainment now. In the 60's we craved high energy vaudeville and perhaps the heroes filled that better than even most of television. Athletic men and sexy chicks in bizarre costumes leaping around doing tricks, telling jokes, losing in the beginning so they could look good in the end; the scene was a natural of the times. But this time around, it's old hat. And we're tired of it. We no longer feel like the world is precipitated on the brink of catastrophy by rampaging cosmic forces. We are mastering our fear of the apocalypse and working constructively to avert it. We can now look to our own resources for solutions and no longer need to rely on magical saviors. No more second hand god!

Despite the tons of western, war, love and horror comics, none of these subjects have been covered in the medium in other than the most banal way. None of them (except for the ECs) have delved into the emotional realities in these potent areas and so the surface has only been scratched. Even humor has been left largely unexplored. So, it's possible that all of these areas can be explored AGAIN———but correctly this time.

All of these trends that I've mentioned promise to continue. As the current NY pro editors and publishers refuse to change, super hero sales will continue to decline as readers graduate to more sophisticated entertainment within and without the comic medium. No one is reall y worried about the future of comics, except for, possibly, the pro editors who should be worried about their jobs! They must feel anxious thattheir product is slipping through their fingers and they don' know howto cope.

Let them look up from their tear splashed blotters and subscribe to the new directions emerging to lead us forward.


LARRY LAGOON
IN:
"FANZINE BLUES"
KRAUSS-72-#2
HI LARRY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
OH, HI JOJO, I JUST FINISHED WRITING A LETTER TO "YOUNG LOVERS!"
I'M POINTING OUT TO THE EDITORS THAT THEY JUST HAVEN'T HAD THEIR CHARACTERS KISSING ENOUGH LATELY!
WHY, DO YOU REALIZE THAT IN THE LAST FIVE ISSUES ONLY 14.6973 SQUARE INCHES OF THE PANELS HAVE BEEN LIPS, COMPARED TO THE OVER-ALL 7,589 SQUARE INCHES THAT HAVE APPEARED?!
GOSH, THAT'S FANTASTIC! BUT WHY ARE YOU BOTHERING TO FIGURE OUT ALL THAT IN THE FIRST PLACE?
WHY?!! TO GET IT PUBLISHED! HOW ELSE DO YOU EVER EXPECT TO BECOME A PRO?
ONE OF THE FELLA'S OVER AT MARVEL WILL PROBABLY SEE IT AND I'LL BE WORKING FOR STAN LEE IN NO TIME!
GOSH! COULD I HAVE YOUR AUTOGRAPH!?
NOT NOW JOJO, I'VE GOTTA GO OVER TO ROBERT BENSON'S, SO YOU'LL HAVE TO LEAVE!
I'M GONNA SHOW HIM MY LETTER AND SEE WHAT HE THINKS OF IT!


MINUTES LATER AT ROBERT BENSON'S APARTMENT...
WELL, YOU THINK THEY'LL PUBLISH IT?
LARRY, I THINK YOU'RE GOING ABOUT THIS THE WRONG WAY!
AFTER ALL, YOU'VE NEVER EVEN HAD ANY OF YOUR WORK IN A FANZINE!
I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT ROBERT! HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO PUBLISH THIS ILLO OF CASPER IN YOUR FANZINE "SUPERSLICK?"
IT WOULDN'T HAVE TO BE THE COVER OR ANYTHING BUT...
LAGOON
ACTUALLY LARRY, WHAT I HAD IN MIND WAS YOU PUBLISHING YOUR OWN ZINE!
THAT WAY YOU COULD WRITE, DRAW, AND EDIT!
HOW MUCH DO ZINES COST TO PRINT? I GET 50¢ EVERY SATURDAY...
NO, NO LARRY! WHAT I MEAN IS, GET YOUR PARENTS TO FINANCE THE OPERATION!
EXPLAIN YOUR PLANS TO THEM, ASK FOR THEIR HELP! I'M SURE THEY'LL BE GLAD TO LOAN YOU THE MONEY!
THANKS A MILLION ROBERT!
I'LL HAVE THE FIRST ISSUE OUT IN TWO OR THREE WEEKS!
GLAD TO BE OF HELP! COME BY ANY TIME IF YOU'VE GOT ANY QUESTIONS!
2

PHEW! I THOUGHT I'D NEVER GET RID OF THAT PEST! IMAGINE A CASPER ILLO IN MY FANZINE!

NOW I CAN GET BACK TO WORK ON THE LATEST ISSUE! WONDER WHAT I DID WITH THAT HOT STUFF COVER!

MEANWHILE AT LARRY'S HOUSE...

OH COME ON DAD, LET ME HAVE MY OWN FANZINE!

YOU PROMISE TO GET BETTER MARKS IN SCHOOL?

YES!

AND YOU'LL STOP SEEING THAT ROBERT BENSON, HE'S TOO OLD FOR YOU, LARRY! HE'S A BAD INFLUENCE! YOU PLAY WITH JOJO, HE'S A NICE BOY!

O.K. DAD!

ALL RIGHT THEN, YOU CAN HAVE A FANZINE, BUT REMEMBER WHOSE IDEA IT WAS!

NOW, GO GET A HAIRCUT!

AND SO AS THE WEEKS ROLL BY LARRY ADVERTISES IN THE NATION'S THREE LEADING ADZINES!

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

17

A NEW FANZINE IS COMING OUT SO WE NEED CONTRIBUTIONS! SEND YOUR STUFF, CHANCES ARE WE'LL TAKE IT! SEND TO: L. LAGOON 2209 MANOR MADISON, WISC.

DC AND MARVEL PROS: THIS IS YOUR BIG CHANCE TO BECOME A FAN! STRIPS AND ILLOS NOW BEING ACCEPTED FOR A NEW FANZINE CALLED "FANDOM FOREVER" SEND TO: L LAGOON

CLASSIFIED ADS

SEND YOUR ART, STORIES AND DRAWINGS TO L. LAGOON FOR A NEW FANZINE WE'RE NOT QUITE AS GOOD AS SPA FOR BUT ALL ARTWORK NOT DO SUCH A GIRL IN HER BIRTHDAY SUIT!

AND ONE DAY...

HI LARRY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

I'M WORKING ON MY FANZINE! IT'S ALMOST READY FOR THE PRINTERS NOW!

TAKE A LOOK AT IT JOJO!

I'VE GOT ARTWORK BY KAZOOTY, FRANTONY, AND PAJUJOP!
AND ARTICLES BY COTTONWOOD, SNIVLEY, AND EVEN ORPHUEM!
GOSH, LARRY!! WHAT ELSE IS IN IT?
WELL, DON'T EVER TELL ANYONE, 'CAUSE IF MY PARENTS EVER FOUND OUT THEY'D TAKE THE WHOLE FANZINE AWAY FROM ME, BUT TAKE A GANDER AT THESE DRAWINGS!!
LARRY, THOSE WOMEN DON'T HAVE ANY CLOTHES ON!!
YUP!
MRS. LAGOON, LARRY'S PRINTING NAKED WOMEN IN HIS FANZINE!
AUGHHH!!
4

the communication column

[Many moons ago, when TCA was first aborning, we asked as many pros and top fans as possible, why they were interested in the comics. We had hoped to use the answers in conjunction with an article we were planning, but as luck would have it, very few of the answers which we recieved were really good enough to use for such a feature. Thus: no article. There were, however, a few very interesting answers which deserve to be published. Here is one such response:]

John Benson
N.Y., N.Y.,

I'm interested in comics because it's a young form, which has all the artistic possibilities of any new form. These possibilities are still being explored and it's exciting to watch and discover those explorations.

So my interest is in those who I think of as the true comic creators, primarily those writer-artists who in their own ways have been forging the basics of this form—— people like Eisner, Kurtzman, Barks, Kingstein, Bob Crumb——who have contrived to use images to advance a narrative, and to advance one that's worth telling.

But it seems that the commercial set up of comics is such that most of the creators who used the field to experiment in have left it, and it's largely the ones whose interest in fantasy keeps them at the drawing board who are left (although their work, of course, is as exciting in its own way). So I find that my interest except for underground comics—— is primarily with the works of the comic creators, who are no longer working in the field.

I'd also like to say that there's a certain appeal in the very fact that comics are despised by cultural authority. I don't know if you recall the exchange between Burne Hogarth and Will Eisner at the 1968 Convention. It seemed that Hogarth was saying that it ain't art until it's hung in the Louvre——which includes his work, of course——and Eisner was saying that cultural acceptance is an external value placed on the material which has nothing to do with the intrinsic value that a creator brings to his work.

Well, there's almost an inverse snob appeal to me, here. It's sort of —— "I can percieve the artistic value in comics when others who rely on cultural acceptance have dismissed them, at least for now." Us against the Establishment, you know?

Gordon Matthews
8 Perry St., Union City, Pa., 16937

Neal Pozner's article was at least interesting. What's this thing about "success," though. I get the idea that Neal thinks the only kind of fanzine anyone can put out is one with a circulation of a thousand. This is what caused the slick—zine mess in the first place! Gaining and maintaining a large circulation means aiming at the least common denominator, which is the ultimate downfall of every art form. The awful part is that this is totally unnecessary in fandom. If fan eds weren't so hung up about the egoboo they get from using offset and having lots of people read their name, they would be able to concentrate on making a serious contribtuition. If they ARE interested in anything other than their egos.

And now on to the Gerard Geary speech: Can't say I would enjoy a comic (or any other story form) filled with nothing but good vibes. Christ, it would be BORING!! Even in a basically optimistic story, some sort of dilemma is required to make the happy ending shine by contrast. My opinion is that what we look for in any form of entertainment is the negative. We don't care about a character who lives happily ever after; interest is gained when something bad happens to him. Maybe this isn't good, but there it is. And what's good, anyway?

John McLaughlin
890 Savory Drive; Sunnyvale, CA., 94087

. . . The Fujitake material was totally enjoyable. The same applies to Klaus Janson. I've watched his style evolve since his early days with Mike Robertson's Concussion. Mitra, but that was a long time ago!!! Is Klaus putting us on with this Don Rambo business? Or is he serious?

Neal's "RIP Fandom" is pretty remonstrative. And, also quite true. Basically, I think the reason for so many upstart fanzine editors spending money buying pro art is to defy the number one unwritten law of fandom's publisher's: a fanzine is a NON profit venture.

To make their zines sell, they get the so called big names to scream and yell about in the adzines to "sell" their publication. To make a profit your publication just simply has to sell. And at a higher price than is the custom. Hence, fandom is flooded with a dozen art filled zines that cost you an arm and a leg but hardly give your eyes a chance to get where the action is.

Why no text? Simple? It just doesn't sell. Unless, of course, it's got a name like Strnad, Decker, Isabella, Evanier, Matthews or something along the pfofessional lines of Asimov, Ellison, etc. And even then, it tends to be less popular than art.

And, no matter how much the artists out there may disagree with me, writing takes more time than drawing. My logic is thus: when you set out to make your fantastic drawing, you've already got an idea conceptualized —— when it's rendered in pencil, you correct the flaws. When it's inked, it's finished. Oh, you can do as many corrections or paste—ups as you wish —— but you DID finish that drawing.

Now a writer has that concept before he starts. His first draft gets down the basics. But even when he's reached his final draft, there may be —— and almost always is, something that needs changing. So, he can change it without it showing —— showing, so to speak, as obviously as does a correction made on a drawing.

Also a-factor involved with this whole mess is the fact that an artist can pass off his quickly rendered material —— his second rate artwork on these fanzines without much of a harmful effect on his reputation. After all, when he goes to a professional publisher, he's got a portfolio of his best stuff under his arm. Now tell me, how long does it take to look at ten or twenty drawings, paintings,, or what-have-you? Ok, now imagine ten or twenty pieces of literature: the writer's portfolio. It takes quite some time to peruse short stories, poems, etc. . .

So, what this all boils down is this: writers

tend to have less time than artists do. Now, it's quite possible that I'm totally wrong about this — — and these fourparagraphsmay be just a bunch of equestrian guano . . .But most of the writers I've met just seem to be busier than the artists I've been acquainted with.

But besides all this, the basic problem seems to be that these fanzine publishers DON'T WANT text. . . No matter how good the fan is. Sometimes even pro writers are looked upon with equal disinterest.

It's a bad case to be sure. And yet, fandom itself is keeping it alive and well. Remember back when fandom's main gripe was the dealers who sold comics for such high prices? The solution then was simple: just don't buy your comics from them and they'll have to bring their prices down. The same gripe exists now — — with the addition of a transfer to the fanzine itself: the "all-art-zine." We complain about how it would be better if the pros kept to the pro mags and left the fanzines to the fans. Yet, we all patronize these zines.

How can we NOT patronize them: we all dig pro art. What a hell of a dilemma! But, there's some way out of EVERY dilemma. The solution that first comes to me would be a fanzine that operates on a certain budget: the fans get as many pages with or without color as the budget can afford. The price remains the same, and the adjustable profit takes care of the production costs- - while the publisher gets some money in return instead of losing it. Then, a happy balance ofwritten and visual features is chosen by the editor's tastes and reader reaction/ feedback. Of course, you won't be getting all that Wrightson and Kaluta art work, but you will be getting a good, high quality publication called a FANZINE.

Remember: the purpose of fanzines is to develop the new talent to get up there and start shoving the pro institutions around— — force them to make the changes we're all crying for. Wrightson, Kaluta, etc. have already made it into prodom— — let them do the pushing there — — where it does some good, not in fandom.

(If this is printed, Crom, what a lot of controversy it's going to stir up. Oh well, it's not the first time I've unintentionally gotten people mad at me.)

:: As I'm sure everyone realizes by now, Klaus Janson's real name is (surprise!) Klaus Janson. Telling us that his real name was Donald Rambo was just a little of joke of his (har-har).

William Fugate,
1112 Sparks Rd., Lexington, Ky., 40505

For about half of the T. Casey Brennan interview, I agreed with the man. But the other half was pure hostility . . . allow me to say right now that I like super heroes , particularly chauvinist— type Blue Beetles and Spectres. This is PURE enjoyment. . . no further comment or qualifacation necessarv.
His blanket condemnation of "Super-duper Vs. Spacemonster Trash" comics was unwarrented and easily passed over.

Artwise: there was Fujitake's half—assed Wrightson and Ditko imitation ——and Cornell's half—assed Jones imitation. Too much of someone elses' style, and not enough real-draftsmanship.

Cornell particularly is not a good draftsman. He does not understand antomy, and the positioning of his figures is pretentious and unconvincing. My point: your artists should pay more attention to good, solid cartooning/illustration technique, and less attention to experimenting with STYLES. Jones has a very striking style, but underneath it all is still a complete understanding of his subject matter. Same with Bode, Kirby, Ditko, and Steranko.

::First off, we passed over T. Casey Brennan's generalization about "Super—duper vs. Space Monster Trash" because, basicallly, we agreed with his generalization. We'd much prefer reading a Brennan story than reading most of the pablum that is currentlly in the color comics.

JOHN CORNELL REPLIES- -

I'm sorry if my illustrations haven't been pleasing to you, but then again, this is the first time someone hasn't liked my style. I'm afraid that nothing we do in this world is original. Wholly. All we can do is defend our stuff or change.

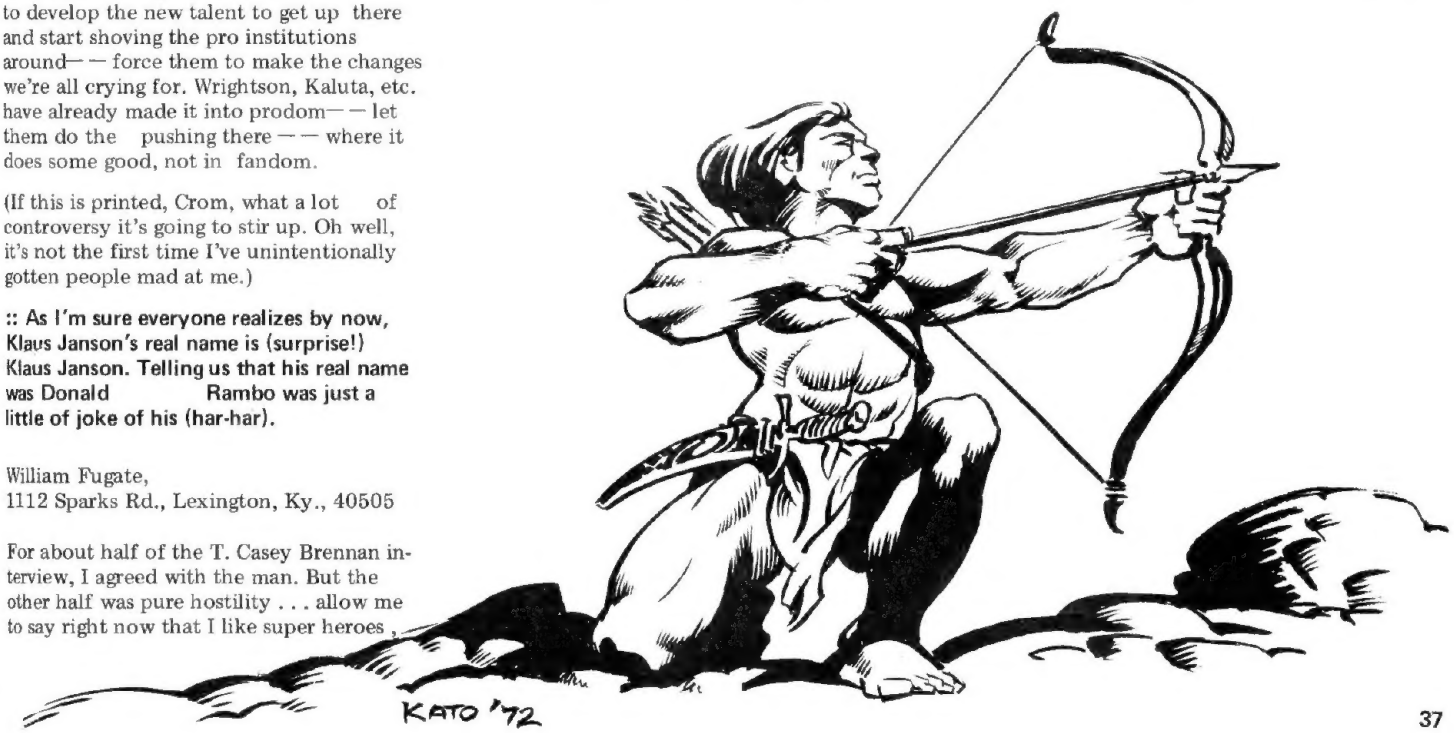
To say that my work is a half—assed Jones imitation is false. Mainly because I've worked this way before Jeff ever thought of hitting the stands. Jeff is a fine artist that works basically in darks while I always work in textures. I have had four years of college anatomy and two autopsies. I feel that I have a good understanding of the human figure, though I realize that there are a still a lot of bugs to work out — — but I feel that this willcome with time. My influences stem from Michelangelo to Frazetta, and there is a lot of them in my work. My il—lustrations are moody and I do try to capture the viewer and make him step over the boundries of the page and into my picture. Kirby and Steranko, though fine artists, do not show any understanding of anatomy in their comic art. The figures are out of proportion and they try to indicate muscles and tendons with straight slashes of their brushes. But I still admire their work. I think that I can rightfully say that Jeff wouldn't be able to see the comparison in our work, and quite a lot of other people would defend my style to the hilt. In conclusion : I will try harder next time to please your eye, but I'm afraid that the style is already branded into me.

sincerely yours,
JTCGCORNELL

Steve Riley
Framingham, Mass.,

Artwise, I was impressed, but I did have some complaints. I noticed that the majority of the fan illos seemed to be tremendously influenced by Frazetta, Jones or other big pros. Not lightly influenced, but very heavy, as if the fans were trying to copy the style of these artists as much as they could, without trying to develop their own talents.

There is nothing wrong with attempting to



use the style of your favorit e artist, or some artist you like, but many fans make a big mistake by imitating someone elses' style, and never developing it in their own way. Imitating a style is good discipline because it trains your hand. But it's far better to develop the style in your own way with your own type of linework or style. For one thing, it shows imagination, and another, talent.

So, I do hope that the fans who work for you will try to get themselves into their artwork more. It's a goddam shame to see guys as talented as those still mimicking greatly Frazetta and Jones, and still doing worn—out subjects like barbarians squatting with the full moon in the sky and soldiers on horseback.

DENNIS FUJITAKE REPLIES

William Fugate and Steve Riley have accused me of "imitation", and, if such is a crime I stand before you, GUILTY!!

Yes, guilty! Guilty of the fact that my artwork resembled Wrightson's whose own work resembled Jones whose own work resembled that of N. C. Wyeth whose own work resembled that of Howard Pyle whose own work resembled that of Rembrandt whose own. . . forgive my redundancy but's that's what this is all about isn't it? I am also condemned for drawing in the manner of Steve Ditko, or was it early Kubert? It is difficult to say because both of their styles resembled the other so closely. Who imitated who? Or did they both imitate Jerry Robinson, an instructor of illustration who taught at the Cartoonists and Illustrators School in New York? Now that we've gotten into this trip on imitation, what of Ralph Reese with a heavy taint of wood? Ken Smith's imitation of Frazetta? Jones and Bode have similar, complementary styles and techniques, one realistic and the other caricaturized. What are the excuses for these inexplicable semblances?

Al Williamson admitted to swiping in an interview in Xanadu 1. He bluntly stated, "Every artists swipes from every other artist — — — anything he can get a hold of."! Surely, this admission of guilt makes him a copycat of the worst sort. How can his conscience bear such an horrendous guilt?

But are allthese men who have demonstrated all kinds of flagrant imitation anything the less for it? Maybe to Mr. Fugate these men are "half—assed" imitators and not real "draftsmen."

Almost a year ago, the editor of this zine asked me for some contributions. His request came at a time when I was in the process of analyzing, studying, and admiring the styles of these great "copiers." Thus, It was inevitable that my work would strongly reflect the styles of these men. For me, this learning process included imitation. I felt then, and I stilldo, that I am still only a student of art trying to develop and evolve a style. I suppose that barbarians and soldiers on horseback are worn out subjects. After all, Frazetta and Jones have done such. So have Wyeth and Pyle, not to mention Reubens, Da Vinci, and Michelangelo. Why, even the classical Greeks! These men obviously had no imagination and talent, what with them using over used ideas and, worse, mimicing one another. For shame!

The point of all of this is not that imitation is the final answer, but that is an essential element in the development of a complete artist. Learning and imitation are linked in all fields of endeavor, and anyone who refuses to accept either is a fool who deserves himself.

thank you for your time and kind attention . . .

Dennis

Dennis Fujitake

As you can see, this issue's letter col is more concerned with different viewpoints on the comics scene than with the many opinions which we recieved on TCA 1. We have chosen to direction the letters section in this fashion because this type of letters section makes for a good discussion ground between fans — — — something fandom needs desperately. It is also important to note that while most fanzines think of their letter cols as "fillers," we don't. We believe that this column is of vital importance to TCA. So, if you want to sound off about anything comics related, but don't want to write an article, just say it in a letter and we'll be glad to print it. Okay? Oh yeah, we'd like to thank everybody for their letters, cards, and dirty phone calls. They've really been a tremendous help (especially those phone calls . . .) So, keep those cards and letters coming (original, eh?)!

— — Dave & Klaus

Editorial

When ever any organizations, whether it be countries or industries, are met with a common crisis, they usually have two courses of action to choose from: either they can unite to face the common enemy, or they can divide themselves and try to fight the foe seperately. The former usually spells success, while the latter prerequisites doom. Perhaps the finest example of this is that of the power struggle between the Allied Forces and the Axis Powers during World War II. The Allied Forces united themselves against the Axis Powers, while the latter divided amongst themselves. And look at who won the war.

This same theory of unification also holds true in the business world. And, in our case, in the comic book industry.

In the 1950's, instead of uniting to confront the wave of anti—comic book thought when it was first aborning, the comic book industry remained aloof and divided. Out of total desperation, they finally did unite. But by then it was too late.

A similar problem is now facing the comics today. For over a decade now, the comics have remained an economically unstable industry. And instead of uniting to form a firmer power base, each seperate comics group has remained just that; seperate. And the results are not at all healthy.

The comic industry's decision not to unify when "The Crisis of The 70's" would occur first became evident in the 1960's when DC comics tenaciously refused to recognize that the Marvel outfit even existed. Once they finally did admit to their existence, the two comics groups began to publicly denounce each other through seemingly jovial referalls to "Brand Ecch" and other such idiocies. Only, underneath all of the joviality, they were both serious. Deadly so.

This division between the two major comics groups became much sharper as they both began to ecoriate each other through articles on the graphic story industry in nationally distributed magazines.

With the advent of the twenty—five cent comic book, though, this gap between the two major comics groups has become a grim, dark abyss. For this battle has reached the most important and volatile of levels: the corporate level. Because DC comics boldly decided to make all of their comics a quarter, they began one of the most important of corporate power struggles ever to occur in the comics industry. Through this one business decision, the entire economics of the comics changed. Before, all comics were uniform in price, thus meaning that the selling of a comic book was principally based on whether or not the comic book buying public liked that particular book. With the arrival of the twenty-five cent book, economics at every level, from the distributor to the consumer, was now a major element in the succes of the books. Realizing this, DC and Marvel entered into a furious economic battle. And after all of the financial manuevering and dirty-play was over, there was a victor. Marvel.

As a result of this battle, the two major comics companies are now extremely bitter rivals. Such a rivalry can only hurt the industry. Instead of a division, there should be a unification within the comics industry. Although co-operating with competing companies might at first seem like bad business, in the long run it really isn't. For the only way in which the comics can establish a firmer base is through a co-ordination of the companies. If the comics outfits were more unified they could have very easily decided together on whether or not they should raise the comics to the twenty-five cent price tag; thus avoiding the twnety—five cent comic book near disaster. Such a unification could also help raise the quality of each company's books in addition to uplifiting the comics' public image.

Perhaps we are looking at this whole problem to idealistically. Perhaps. But such idealism is certainly healthier than the myopic cynicism that the industry's publishers are suffering from today. It is this disease that causes each comics outfit to look to the future in terms of merely the next year instead of the next TEN years. It is this disease that causes the comics groups to foolishly and needlessly engage in economic and creative battles. And it is this disease that will prove to be the ultimate downfall of the comics.

The comics can not afford such foolishness.

DAN ADKINS-